The Marvel Magazine of Fantasy & Science-Fiction / October 1983 / $2.50 £1 U.K. - $3.00 CAN.

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epic ILLUSTRATED™

this issue:
the conclusion of
LAST OF
THE DRAGONS

plus: a dramatic
new series
THE SACRED AND
THE PROFANE

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THE SACRED & THE PROFANE

WHY DO I LOOK TO THE HEAVENS, NOW PLAYING HOST TO US, WITH SUCH FEAR AND DISQUIET? HOW COULD I ALLOW SUCH APPREHENSION TO FLOURISH WITHIN ME, WHEN ONCE I WAS SO CERTAIN OF OUR MOTIVES AND MYSELF? THE CRUSADE FRIGHTENS ME. THE MISSION SCARES ME. THE POWER I SEE IS THE OVERWHELMING POWER OF THESE MACHINES... AND IT OVERSHADOWS THE POWER OF OUR FAITH. NOT IMMEDIATELY OF COURSE; OUR PRAYERS ARE TOO DIRECT, OUR PURPOSE TOO GRAND.

§BUT CONVICTION HAS SLIPPED FROM MY GRASP OF LATE AND I FEAR THAT I AM NO LONGER FIT TO REMAIN WITHIN THE CONVENT OF ST. CATHERINE'S MISSION. IS MY OWN HUMAN WEAKNESS TO BLAME, OR IS SATAN PREYING ON THAT WEAKNESS? I RESENT THIS INTRUSION ON MY FAITH — BUT I CAN NOT RESIST IT. IF ONLY I MIGHT WALK IN CONFIDENT, REVERENT DEVOTION ONCE MORE; FOR THIS DOUBT IS NOT HUMBLE. I KNOW THE WORK OF THIS MISSION TO BE GREAT, AND I AM BOUND TO IT. WHY DO I MISTRUST IT SO?

§I KNOW THAT IF I AM TO GAIN SALVATION FROM THIS APOSTASY I MUST CONFESS AND ATONE. AND, PERHAPS, LOOK TO SOMEONE STRONGER THAN I, SOMEONE WITH CONFIDENCE IN THIS SUPREME ACT OF MAN'S FAITH AND LOVE OF GOD. BISHOP BROCK AND MOTHER ANAIS WOULD, OF COURSE, CHASTISE THE WEAKNESS WITHIN ME. (HAVEN'T I ALREADY DONE SO FOR TOO LONG?) BUT THEY COULD NOT PROVIDE ASSURANCE.

§I FEAR THAT THE TIME HAS COME TO LEAVE THE SISTERHOOD AND TO TAKE UP STATUS AS A LAY PERSON. MY DOUBTS ARE SUCH THAT I AM NO LONGER WORTHY OF THE ORDER. I HAVE BECOME A HYPOCRITE AND, WHAT IS WORSE, A HERETIC. HOW DO I TELL MOTHER ANAIS, WHO PERSONALLY SELECTED ME FOR THE MISSION? I KNOW SHE WOULD BE HEARTBROKEN.

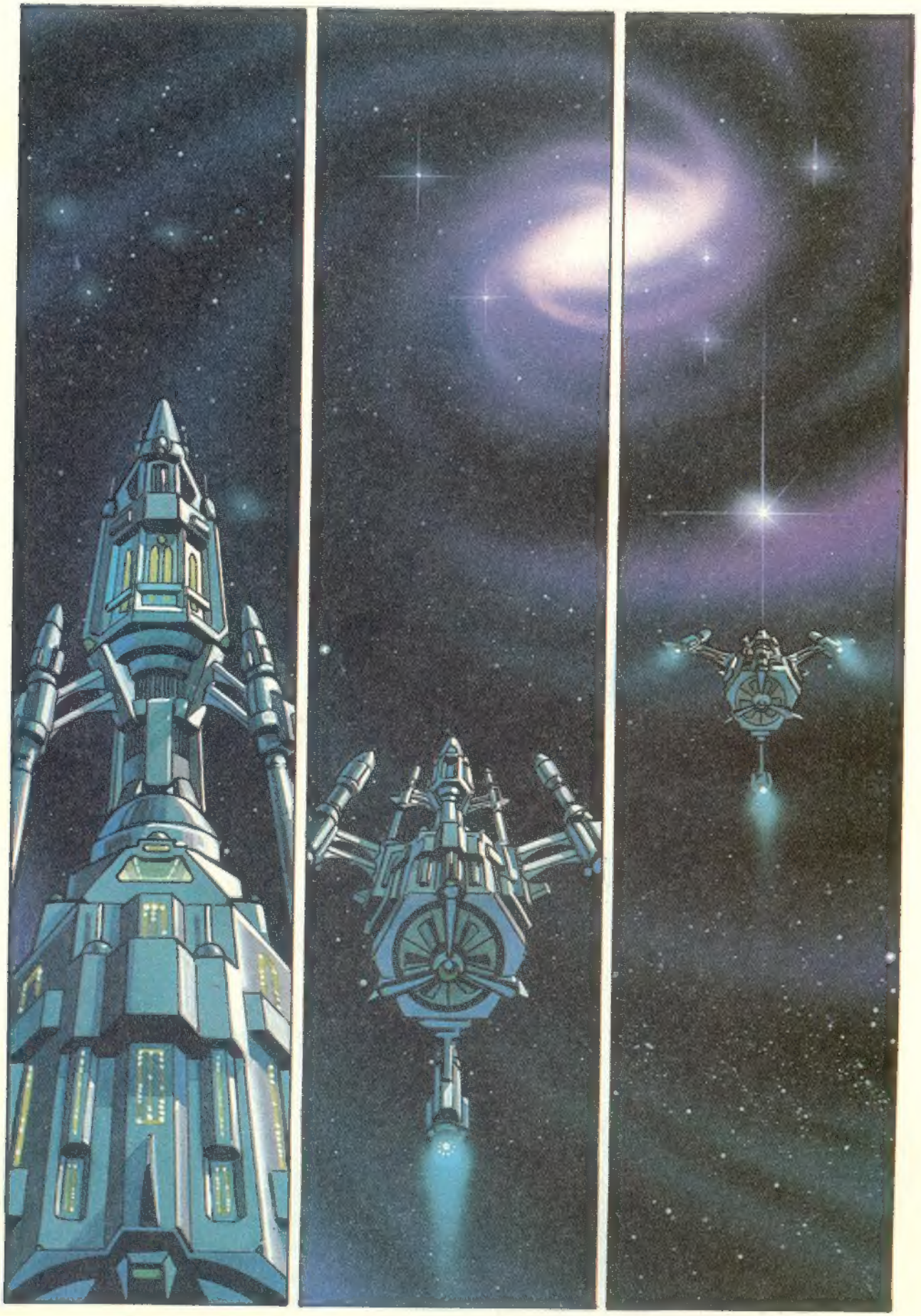
§I HOPE AND PRAY THAT THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST WILL GIVE ME STRENGTH AND FIND THE ANXIOUSNESS IN MY HEART. "*Domine, Exaudi orationem meam et clamor meus ad te veniat.*" (*Lord hear my prayer, and let my cry come unto thee*)

S. Marianna

By *Dean Motter and Ken Steacy* A STAR + REACH PRODUCTION c MCMLXXXII

INVENTIO:
Chapter I

Figures of Menace



I SHOULD LIKE TO THANK YOU FOR CONSENTING TO PLAY ME, ERIC. WE HAVE SEEN SO VERY LITTLE OF EACH OTHER LATELY.
THE PLEASURE IS MINE, YOUR EMINENCE. I MUST SAY THAT I REGRET POSTPONING IT FOR SO LONG.
YOU KNOW THAT I'M NOT MUCH OF A CHESS PLAYER. THE TRUTH IS THAT I WISHED TO SPEAK WITH YOU.
OF COURSE . . . YOUR MOVE.
YOU'VE SPOKEN WITH MOTHER ANAIS ABOUT YOUR MISGIVINGS CONCERNING THE MISSION.
MISGIVINGS? UNEASINESS, PERHAPS, BUT MISGIVINGS? NEVER, SIR.
WELL, THEN, WHAT SORT OF UNEASINESS?
IT IS RATHER DIFFICULT TO ARTICULATE, YOUR EMINENCE. HAS IT EVER OCCURRED TO YOU THAT WE ARE A VERY LONG WAY NOT ONLY FROM EARTH BUT FROM EARTHLY ORDER AND EVENTS, AS WELL?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
I ONCE PLAYED A MATCH WITH A FRENCH THEOLOGICIAN WHO WAS ALSO A GRAND MASTER. THE EXTRAORDINARY THING ABOUT THE GAME WAS THAT NEITHER CHESSMEN NOR BOARD WERE USED. IT WAS PLAYED ENTIRELY VERBALLY.

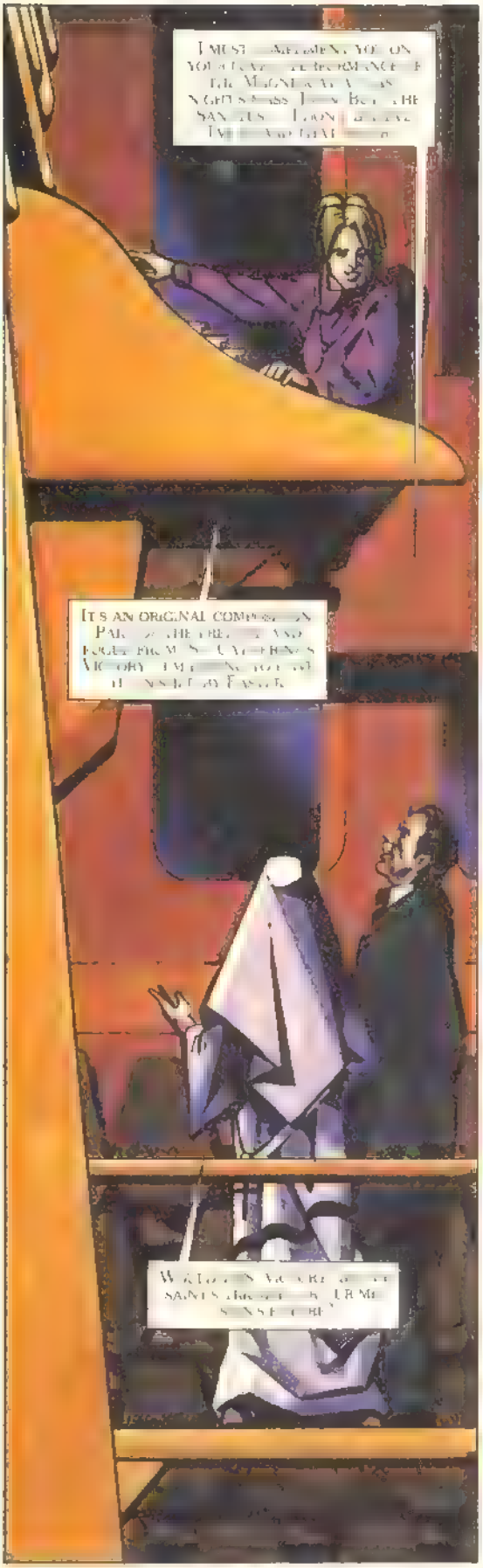
INCREDIBLE.
PERHAPS. MY POINT IS THAT, TO AN ONLOOKER, THE MATCH APPEARED TO BE NOTHING MORE THAN A VERY CALM CONVERSATION . . .
I TAKE IT THAT YOU ARE SUGGESTING WE ARE NOW IMPERCIPIENT ONLOOKERS? THAT WE ARE UNAWARE OF . . . WHAT? DANGER? OUT HERE?
IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN QUITE POSSIBLE. THESE GAMES ARE PLAYED ON MANY LEVELS. ONE CAN'T BE FOREVER SAYING ONE'S LAST PRAYERS. CHECK, YOUR EMINENCE.
OH DEAR . . . ONE MOMENT —
YES? I SEE. WELL, IF IT IS SOME SORT OF ASTEROID THEN IT IS A MATTER FOR THE ARCH BISHOP. CELESTIAL NAVIGATION IS HIS RESPONSIBILITY. YOU'LL FIND HIM IN CHAMBERS. — AS YOU WERE SAYING, ERIC?
CHECKMATE, SIR . . . CARE FOR ANOTHER GAME?

HAS HE PASSED THIS WAY, MARIANNA? YOU ALWAYS LOOK PARTICULARLY DEVOUT AFTER YOU'VE SEEN HIM.
I'M NOT SURE I UNDERSTAND . . .
LOOK! IF YOU HAVE CONTEMPT FOR ME, SISTER, YOU MIGHT JUST AS WELL COME OUT AND SAY SO! WE BOTH KNOW HOW YOU PINE FOR JOSHUA — AND THAT YOU COULD NEVER —
COME NOW MISS BROCK, SURELY YOU HAVE BETTER THINGS TO DO THAN DISTURB THE GOOD SISTER HERE, AMIDST HER DUTIES.

I'M NOT USED TO BEING SPOKEN TO THAT WAY, MR. DAEDELUS. AND I DON'T THINK I LIKE IT!
YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO SAY ANYTHING, ERIC.
WHY DO YOU TOLERATE HER HARASSMENT, SISTER MARIANNA? CAN YOU AFFORD TO BE SO ANGELIC?
SO, FLAUNTING YOUR SENSUALITY IN THE FACE OF LOVE-SICK NUNS! REALLY JOAN, THAT DOESN'T BECOME YOU AT ALL!
LET ME GO!

I CALLED YOU TO THE BRIDGE, JOSHUA!
WHO THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?!
WHERE WERE YOU LAST NIGHT? I EXPECTED YOU IN MY ROOM!
YOUR HOLINESS . . . I WAS ON MY WAY BUT I WAS DETAINED BY MISS BROCK, HERE.
OH CHRIST!
BE ON YOUR WAY MISS BROCK . . . I'M NOT INTERESTED IN YOUR SORDID AFFAIRS . . .
OR YOURS, PURIFIER!
IT WASN'T WHAT IT LOOKED LIKE, ARCH BISHOP. I WAS SIMPLY—
JUST WHAT THE DEVIL DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING? YOU ARE AN AGENT OF THE MISSION — NOT A PASSENGER. YOU ARE NOT TO ANNOY MEMBERS OF THIS CONGREGATION! . . . AND ESPECIALLY BISHOP BROCK'S NIECE!
SHE'S A PROMISCUOUS FLIRT! SHE DESERVES NO SPECIAL —

NOW, YOU LISTEN TO ME! YOUR ARE NOT ABOVE CRITICISM — SEVERE CRITICISM AT THAT! YOUR POSITION IS SHAKY! YOU ARE A CONTROVERSY!
I ASSURE YOU ARCH BISHOP . . .!
YOU ARE SUPPOSED TO BE A SOLDIER OF THE CROSS! YOUR NECK IS ON THE PROVERBIAL LINE, JOSHUA. MY OWN NECK IS RIGHT BESIDE IT. IT WAS MY INSISTANCE THAT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR PRESENCE HERE. THE LEGION OF PURIFICATION IS NOT AS POPULAR AS YOUR ARROGANCE WOULD HAVE IT! AND I WON'T HAVE MY POSITION ENDANGERED BY YOUR GLUTTONOUS EGO!
I WANT YOU ON THE BRIDGE, IN UNIFORM, NOW! AND I DON'T WANT TO HAVE TO SPEAK TO YOU AGAIN!
YES, YOUR HOLINESS . . . SIR!

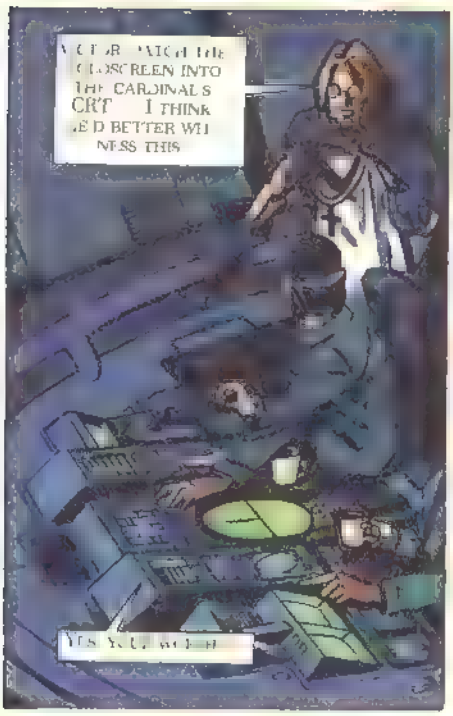

I MUST COMPLIMENT YOU ON YOUR LATEST PERFORMANCE
IT'S NOTHING LESS THAN BRILLIANT
IT'S AN ORIGINAL COMPOSITION
WELL, I SUPPOSE IT'S BOTH. IT'S ABOUT
I'VE BEEN SCREENING

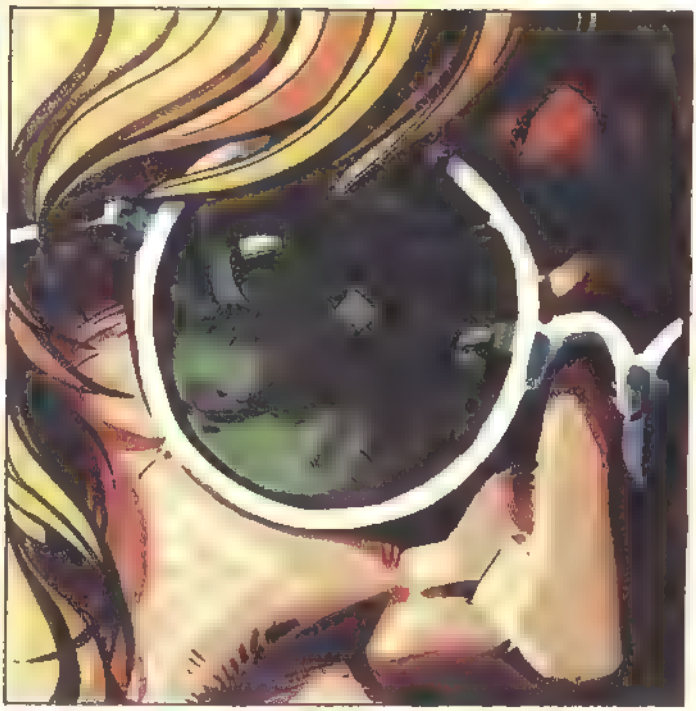
THE CARDINAL IS MUCH TOO BUSY FOR YOU TO DISTURB HIM WITH SUCH PROBLEMS DAVID. I DON'T WANT YOU TROUBLING HIM AGAIN THAT IS WHY I'M HERE. I WANT YOU TO COME TO ME
PARDON ME, FATHER. I DIDN'T MEAN TO INTERRUPT
OH, NOT AT ALL, SISTER. I THOUGHT I SAW YOU SPEAKING WITH MY NIECE. I'M GLAD TO SEE THAT I DO WORRY ABOUT HER. WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?
I WONDER IF I MIGHT SEE YOU — IN PRIVATE. THERE'S SOMETHING RATHER IMPORTANT I WISH TO DISCUSS
AH WELL, WE ALL HAVE OUR PROBLEMS
YES, OF COURSE. VISIT ME IN MY CHAMBERS AFTER FRIDAY'S MASS. IN THE MEANTIME, PRAY. YOU KNOW THAT TO BE A VERY POWERFUL FORCE, AND HE DOES LISTEN, SISTER. WILL YOU DO THAT FOR ME?
YES, FATHER

WELL, MY FRIENDS, WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF THAT? VICTOR?
APPROXIMATELY FIFTY KILOMETERS IN MEAN DIAMETER. IT'S TOO SMALL FOR A PLANETOID. LOOKS ORGANIC.
SHORT RANGE PROBES DON'T SEEM TO INDICATE ANY UNIFORM INTERIOR STRUCTURE. BUT IT LOOKS LIKE SECTION 3 HAS GOT SOMETHING

WE'RE PICKING UP INTERNAL SONICS, YOUR HOLINESS. IT'S A STRONG RESONANT SIGNAL. ULTRASOUND IS SHOWING MOVEMENT. THERE'S SOMETHING IN THERE. SOMETHING ALIVE!
ST. CATHERINE'S HAS ACHIEVED GEO-SYNCHRONOUS ORBIT AS ORDERED, YOUR HOLINESS. ALL SYSTEMS AT OPTIMUM CAPACITY
[illegible] STANDING BY, YOUR HOLINESS

VERY WELL. COMMENCE CONTACT SEQUENCE. RUN PHONETIC, NUMERIC AND GEOMETRIC LANGUAGES FIRST.


[illegible] MATCH THE [illegible] SCREEN INTO THE CARDINAL'S CRT. I THINK WE'D BETTER WITNESS THIS.
YES, YOUR HOLINESS.



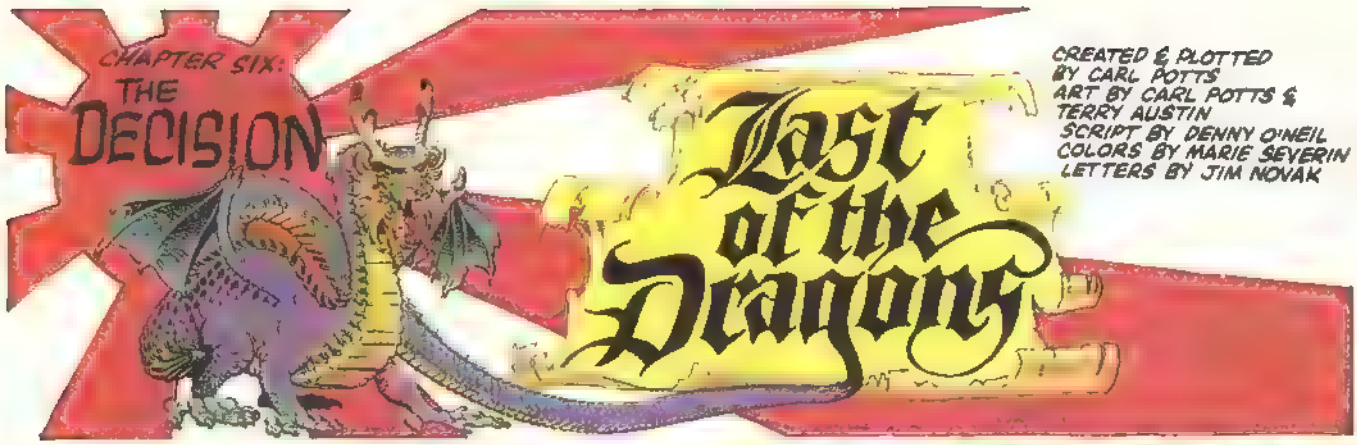
I AM VERY CONCERNED ABOUT YOU SISTER MARIANNA. YOU CARRY A GREAT DEAL OF UNREST IN YOUR HEART. YOUR MIND IN NOT ON YOUR WORK. YOUR TROUBLES ARE NOT GOING UNNOTICED
I KNOW, REVEREND MOTHER. WITH EACH PASSING DAY I FEEL EVEN MORE CONFUSED. IT'S AS IF THE LIFE WE'VE BEEN LEADING HAS BECOME – WELL... FRAGILE, SOMEHOW.
SUCH TALK IS MOST DISTRESSING SISTER. WHAT HAS BECOME OF YOUR FAITH?
MY FAITH IS NOT AN ISSUE. I DO NOT DOUBT THE CHURCH.
FAITH MARIANNA. NOT ONLY IN GOD, BUT IN MEN. BISHOP BROCK AND ARCH BISHOP FRANKLIN ARE GOOD AND PRUDENT MEN. THE HANDS WHICH GUIDE THIS VESSEL ALSO GUIDE OUR VERY LIVES. YOU MUST LEARN TO TRUST THOSE HANDS AGAIN.

THERE IS SOMEONE TO WHOM I LOOK FOR
POWERFUL MANNER OF FAITH. WHAT I SEEM TO LACK IS PERSONIFIED BY HIM SO COMPLETELY — IT IS DISQUIETING — AND PAINFUL. I QUESTION MYSELF AGAIN AND AGAIN; DO I DESIRE HIS PASSIONATE COMMITMENT, OR DO I DESIRE HIM? AM I LOSING MY ABILITY TO DISTINGUISH THE SPIRITUAL FROM THE SENSUAL. AM I FIT TO REMAIN —

MERCIFUL GOD!!

RUN THAT STATUS PROGRAM, VICTOR! I WANT A COMPLETE DAMAGE READOUT! ALEX, PUT DEFENSE SYSTEMS ON STAND-BY! AND GET ENGINEERING ON THE LINE!
MOTHER OF GOD!!
FIRE!
JOSHUA!
YOU FOOL! DO YOU REALIZE WHAT YOU'VE DONE? THAT WAS AN ACT OF WAR!
YES... A HOLY WAR

THE SACRED AND THE PROFANE continues next issue



CREATED & PLOTTED BY CARL POTTS
ART BY CARL POTTS & TERRY AUSTIN
SCRIPT BY DENNY O'NEIL
COLORS BY MARIE SEVERIN
LETTERS BY JIM NOVAK

FAR FROM THE SACRED ISLANDS, THEY STAND: THE SAMURAI, MASANOBU, AND THE NINJA, TAKASHI. THEY ARE MET IN A PLACE CALLED CALIFORNIA, AND THE PAST STINGS THEM LIKE A COLD WIND...

I CAME WITH THE PRIESTS AND THEIR MURDEROUS DRAGONS, TRUE, BUT WHEN I HEARD THEIR PLANS FOR CONQUEST--

SILENCE! I CARE NOTHING FOR THAT .. ANY OF IT! YOU MURDERED MY BELOVED--

--AND I WILL BE AVENGED!

--UNTIL ONE OF US IS CARRION!

THINK A MOMENT, YOUNG FRIEND--

WAIT! MY BLADE NEVER TOUCHED THE GIRL--

THE GIRL WAS DEFEATED... ABOUT TO BE CAPTURED...

I WILL NOT LISTEN TO LIES DRAW YOUR WEAPONS. THE SAVAGES WILL NOT INTERFERE--

...WHAT WOULD *YOU* HAVE DONE? WHAT WOULD YOUR NINJA CODE *DEMAND*?

SHE DIED HONORABLY... BY HER OWN HAND!

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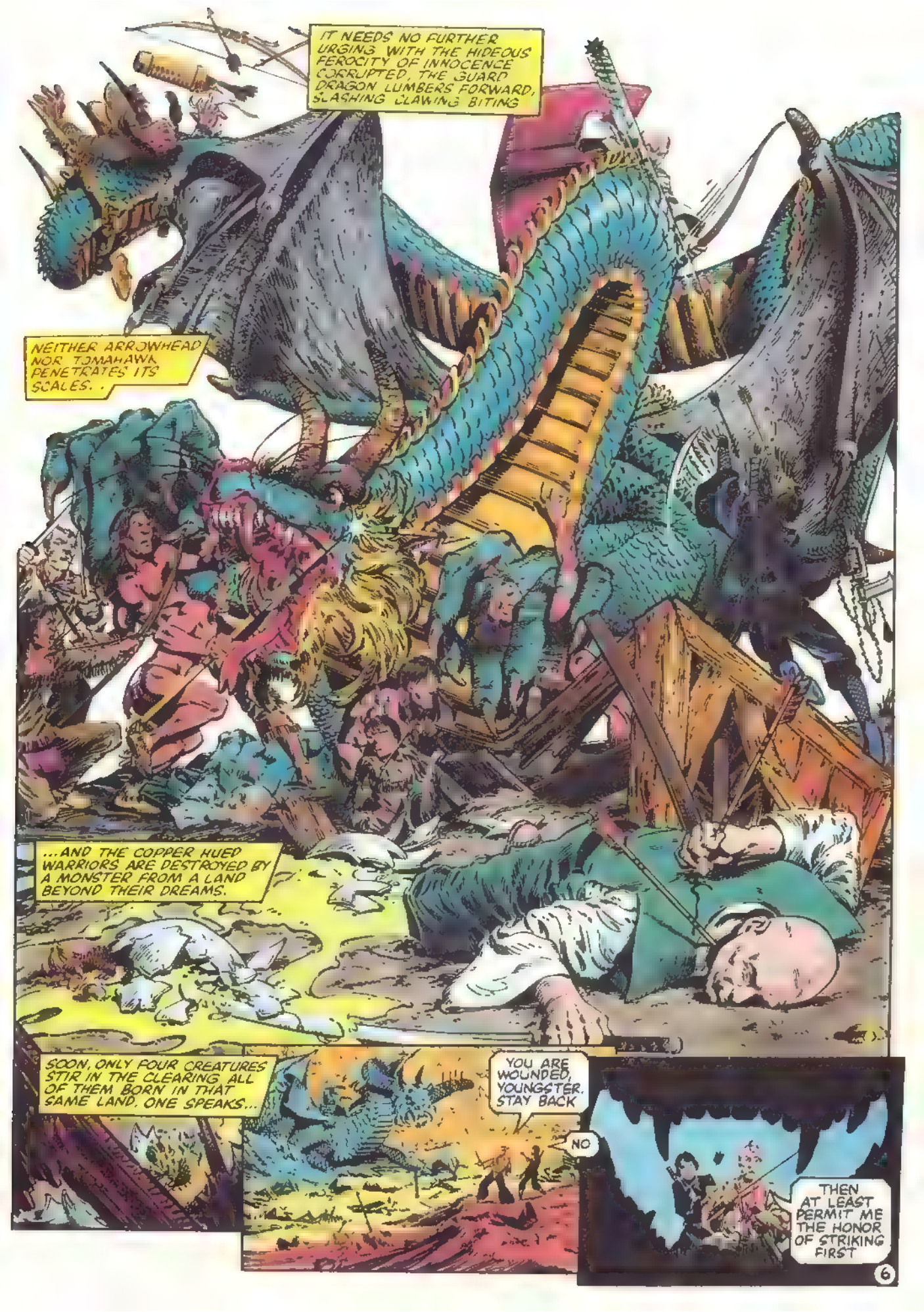
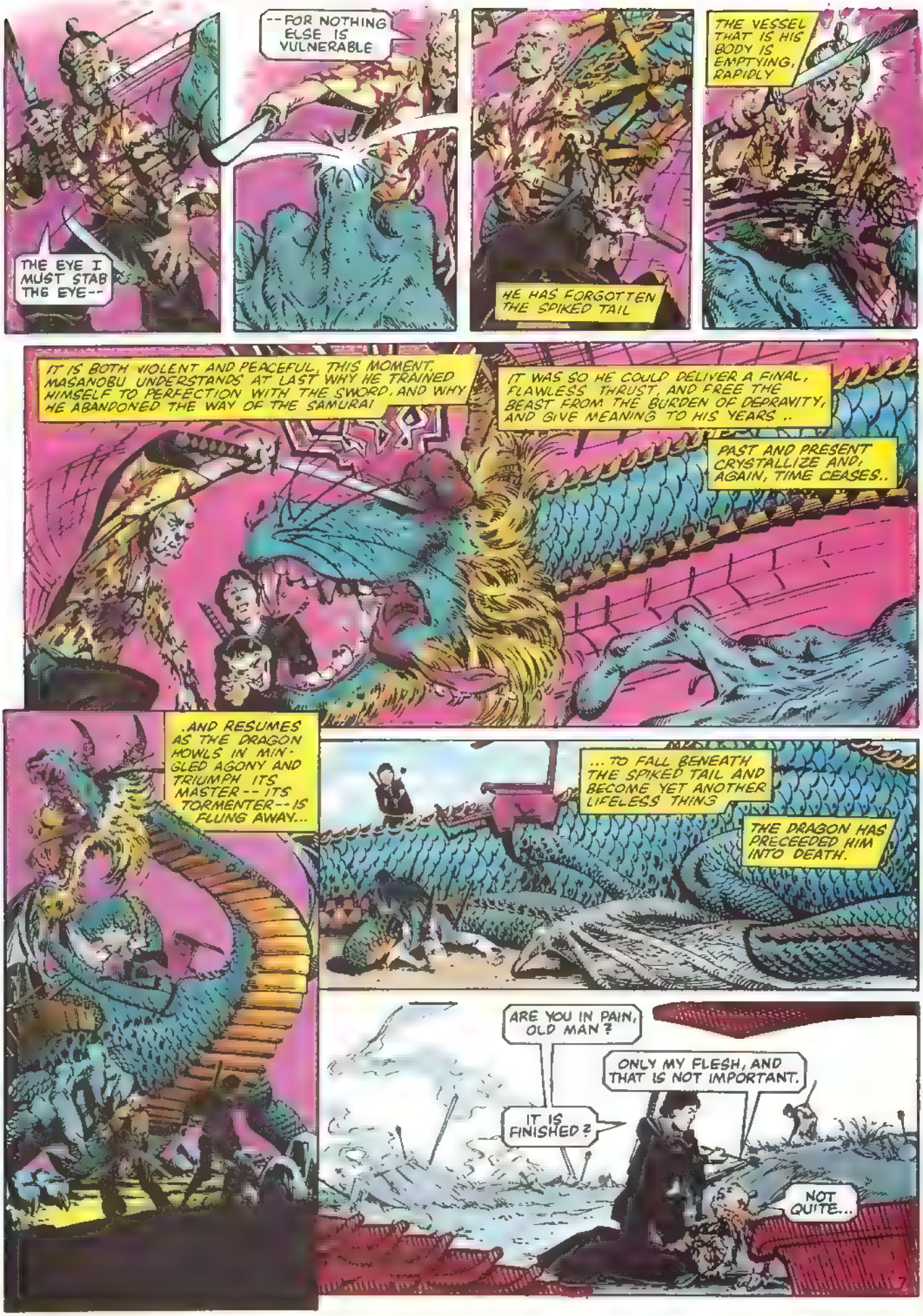
YOU WILL NOT HEED REASON. VERY WELL.
I ALWAYS WAS MORE PERSUASIVE WITH A SWORD IN MY HAND THAN WITH WORDS ON MY TONGUE
YOU ARE ONE INCH OF STEEL AWAY FROM DEATH. BUT I CHOOSE TO SPARE YOU
NOW LISTEN. WE HAVE A COMMON ENEMY.
THE PRIESTS THEY CAUSED YOUR BELOVED'S DEATH AND THEY PERVERTED THE MOST NOBLE BEINGS OF OUR LAND .. THE DRAGONS.
FOR THAT, THEY MUST PERISH.
YES. WE HAVE NO FURTHER QUARREL.
BUT WE DO HAVE A COMMON PURPOSE--
--TO DESTROY THE PRIESTS... AND THE KILLER DRAGON! WILL THESE NATIVES HELP US?
LAST, AND LEAST, THEY DISHONORED ME
ARE YOU CONVINCED?
THEY WILL HELP US DESTROY ALL THE DRAGONS... FROM THE ELDEST TO THE EGGS.
IT WILL REVENGE THEM FOR THE DEATHS OF THEIR WOMEN AND CHILDREN.
THE DRAGON CUBS HAVE YET TO BE CORRUPTED. YOU SEE NO IRONY IN REPAYING THE SLAUGHTER OF INNOCENTS ... WITH THE SLAUGHTER OF INNOCENTS?
NO, YOU DO NOT.
TO THE INDIANS, NEITHER THE TONE OF THE OUTLANDERS' VOICES NOR THE GIBBERISH THEY UTTER MAKE SENSE ..

NO MATTER. THE TRAIL IS CLEAR, AND THAT IS WHAT CONCERNS JAPANESE AND INDIAN ALIKE.
THE AIR IS THICK AND STILL, AND THE FOREST IS SILENT EXCEPT FOR THE FAINT BUZZ OF INSECTS AND FOOTFALLS MUTED BY THE CARPET OF LEAVES
MASANOBU FEELS THE AFTERNOON STRETCH AND GROW TAUGHT--
--THERE IS ONLY THE HOT EMPTINESS OF ONE WHO HAS BEEN DEPRIVED OF TOO MUCH, TOO OFTEN. MASANOBU FEARS FOR THE BABY DRAGONS.
HE FINDS HIMSELF GLANCING FREQUENTLY AT TAKASHI. THERE IS NO PITY IN THE NINJA'S FACE--
THEN...
WAIT! BEYOND THE TREES--
--THE PRIESTS, ARROGANT IN THEIR EASE. THEY ARE CONFIDENT IN THE TERROR THEY INSPIRE, AND SO LOUNGE AROUND THE CAMPSITE UNGUARDED

I DO NOT SEE THE GUARD DRAGON.
NOR DO I. WE WILL NEVER HAVE A BETTER MOMENT TO--
--ATTACK!
AS HE RUNS FORWARD, TAKASHI PUTS ON HIS MASK, AND FOR AN INSTANT, THE DEMONIC FEATURES SEEM MORE REAL THAN HIS OWN.
SEVERAL OF THE PRIESTS DO NOT SURVIVE LONG ENOUGH TO REALIZE THEY ARE UNDER SIEGE.
THE OTHERS ROUSE FROM THEIR LETHARGY AND GROPE FOR THEIR WEAPONS
WITHIN SECONDS, THE CLEARING IS FILLED WITH THE SINGING OF STEEL AND ARROW, AND THE GRUNTS OF THOSE WHO ARE EITHER KILLING OR DYING...

INDIANS DIE--
--AS DO SMALL DRAGONS--
--AND PRIESTS
TAKASHI'S RAGE BECOMES A JOY, AND THE MASK REVEALS, RATHER THAN CONCEALS, THE SOUL OF THE MAN WEARING IT...
HE PAUSES TO SURVEY, HAPPILY, THE CARNAGE, AND THERE IS A VOID WHERE TIME HAS BEEN, AND A RUSTLING SOUND
--A SHOUT...
AT THEM, PET!
SLAY THEM!


IT NEEDS NO FURTHER URGING WITH THE HIDEOUS FEROCITY OF INNOCENCE CORRUPTED, THE GUARD DRAGON LUMBERS FORWARD, SLASHING CLAWING BITING
NEITHER ARROWHEAD NOR TOMAHAWK PENETRATES ITS SCALES. .
...AND THE COPPER HUED WARRIORS ARE DESTROYED BY A MONSTER FROM A LAND BEYOND THEIR DREAMS.
SOON, ONLY FOUR CREATURES STIR IN THE CLEARING ALL OF THEM BORN IN THAT SAME LAND, ONE SPEAKS...
YOU ARE WOUNDED, YOUNGSTER. STAY BACK
NO
THEN AT LEAST PERMIT ME THE HONOR OF STRIKING FIRST
6

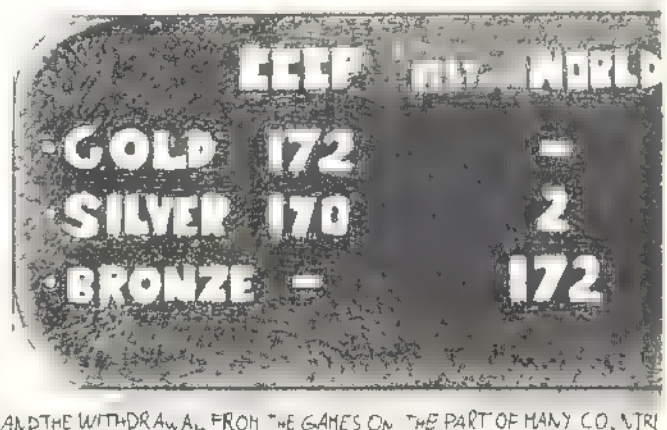

THE EYE I MUST STAB THE EYE--
--FOR NOTHING ELSE IS VULNERABLE
HE HAS FORGOTTEN THE SPIKED TAIL
THE VESSEL THAT IS HIS BODY IS EMPTYING, RAPIDLY
IT IS BOTH VIOLENT AND PEACEFUL, THIS MOMENT. MASANOBU UNDERSTANDS AT LAST WHY HE TRAINED HIMSELF TO PERFECTION WITH THE SWORD, AND WHY HE ABANDONED THE WAY OF THE SAMURAI
IT WAS SO HE COULD DELIVER A FINAL, FLAWLESS THRUST, AND FREE THE BEAST FROM THE BURDEN OF DEPRAVITY, AND GIVE MEANING TO HIS YEARS ..
PAST AND PRESENT CRYSTALLIZE AND, AGAIN, TIME CEASES..
.AND RESUMES AS THE DRAGON HOWLS IN MINGLED AGONY AND TRIUMPH ITS MASTER -- ITS TORMENTER -- IS FLUNG AWAY...
... TO FALL BENEATH THE SPIKED TAIL AND BECOME YET ANOTHER LIFELESS THING
THE DRAGON HAS PRECEEDED HIM INTO DEATH.
ARE YOU IN PAIN, OLD MAN?
ONLY MY FLESH, AND THAT IS NOT IMPORTANT.
IT IS FINISHED?
NOT QUITE...

I SEE TWO YOUNG DRAGONS--
THEY ARE EVIL. THEY MUST BE DESTROYED.
BECAUSE THEY CAN BE TAUGHT TO KILL? YOU HAVE BEEN TAUGHT TO KILL.
IN THEMSELVES, THEY ARE NOT EVIL -- NOR ARE THEY GOOD.
SEE HOW THEY PLAY TOGETHER? LOOK FOR WHAT THEY TRULY ARE IN THAT.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND...
NOR DO I. NOR DO THE WISEST OF THE WISE. BUT I SENSE THEY ARE PART OF A PROCESS...
A SILLY PART OF A PROCESS...
ALLOW IT TO CONTINUE, YOUNG NINJA. ALLOW THE DRAGONS TO BE--
AT THE MOMENT, YES. WHO CAN SAY WHAT IT WILL BE TOMORROW?
--FOR IN THEM, YOU MAY DISCOVER YOURSELF
"IN THEM YOU MAY DISCOVER YOURSELF..."
IT WOULD BE NICE NOT TO WEAR A MASK ANYMORE... ANY MASK.
HE SIGHS, AND IS GONE.

COME. WE'LL GO SOME-PLACE MEN WON'T FIND FOR YEARS--IF EVER.
IN A WHILE, HE WILL BEGIN TO DANCE, AND THEN TO SING; AND THE FUTURE, LIKE THE DRAGONS, WILL BE...

MOSCKA'S GAP

OK' we're on the air.. start the music . . OK Go
am ... the air? yes ... OK here you with the theme
GOOD EVENING, DIRECT BY SATELLITE FROM MOSCOW
WE ARE BRINGING YOU THE 22ND OLYMPIC GAMES. AFTER THE USA



BOYCOTT AND THE WITHDRAWAL FROM THE GAMES ON THE PART OF MANY COUNTRIES, THE RUSSIAN ATHLETES ARE NOW WINNING EVERYTHING. IN THIS INITIAL PHASE ALONE THEY'VE ALREADY WON MOST OF THE GOLD AND SILVER MEDALS

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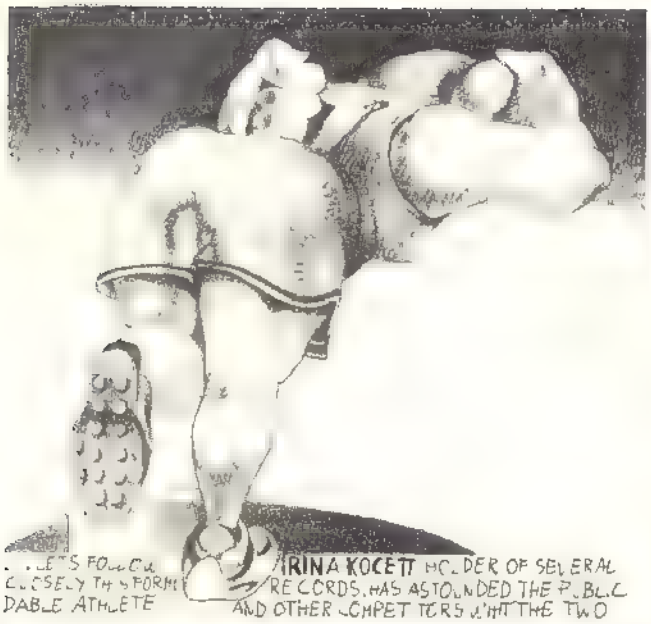
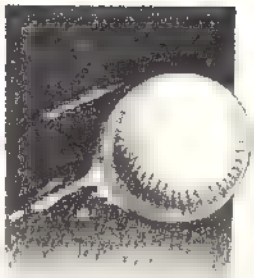


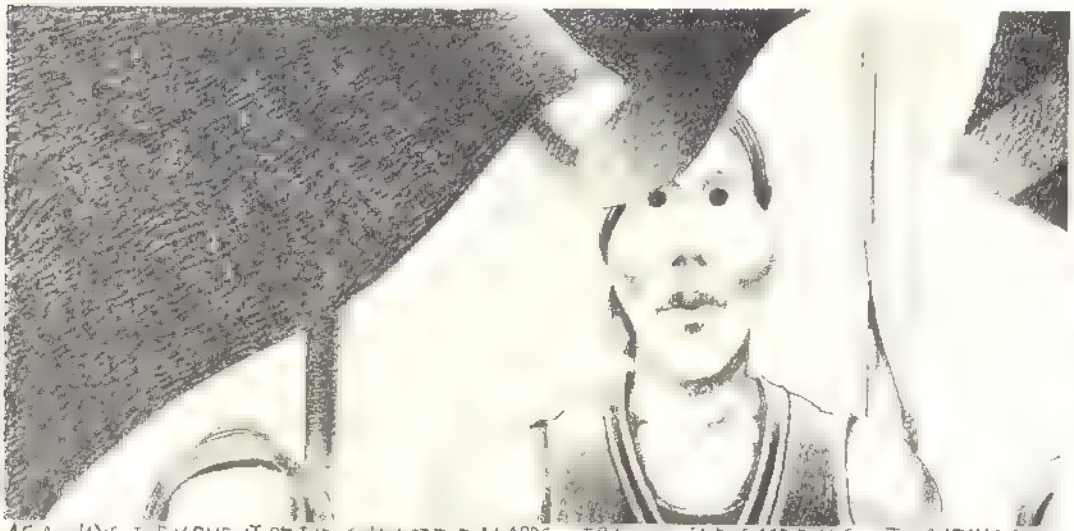
..LET'S FOLLOW CLOSELY THIS FORMIDABLE ATHLETE

IRINA KOCETT HOLDER OF SEVERAL RECORDS, HAS ASTOUNDED THE PUBLIC AND OTHER COMPETITORS WITH THE TWO



PRECEDING THROWS IS THROWING AT A DISTANCE OF 55 AND 77 YARDS HERE

SHE IS AGAIN ON THE PLATFORM... THE STRENGTH SHE PUTS INTO THIS THROW IS FORMIDABLE FANTASTIC! THIS IS THE BEST THROW OF THE CENTURY!

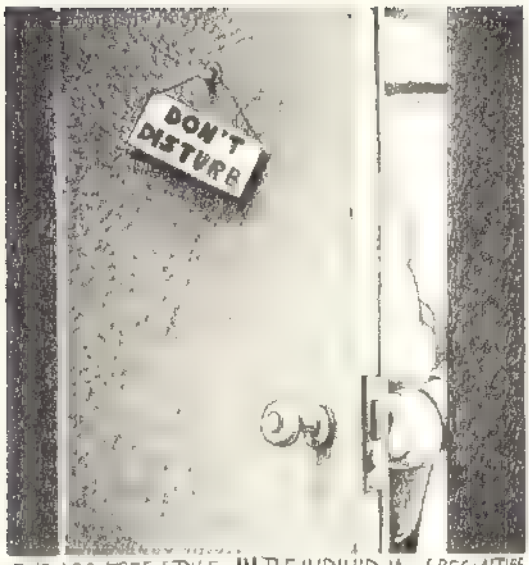


AS ALWAYS, THE MOMENT OF THE GIVING OF THE AWARDS IS THE PEAK OF AN ATHLETE'S CARRER A GOLD MEDAL AT THE OLYMPICS REWARDS THE ATHLETE FOR YEARS OF

TRAINING AND SACRIFICES.. THIS IRINA KOCETT SEEMS DETACHED FROM WHAT IS HAPPENING AROUND HER.... HER COOLNESS IS AS EXTRAORDINARY

AS HER ATHLETIC SKILL ...

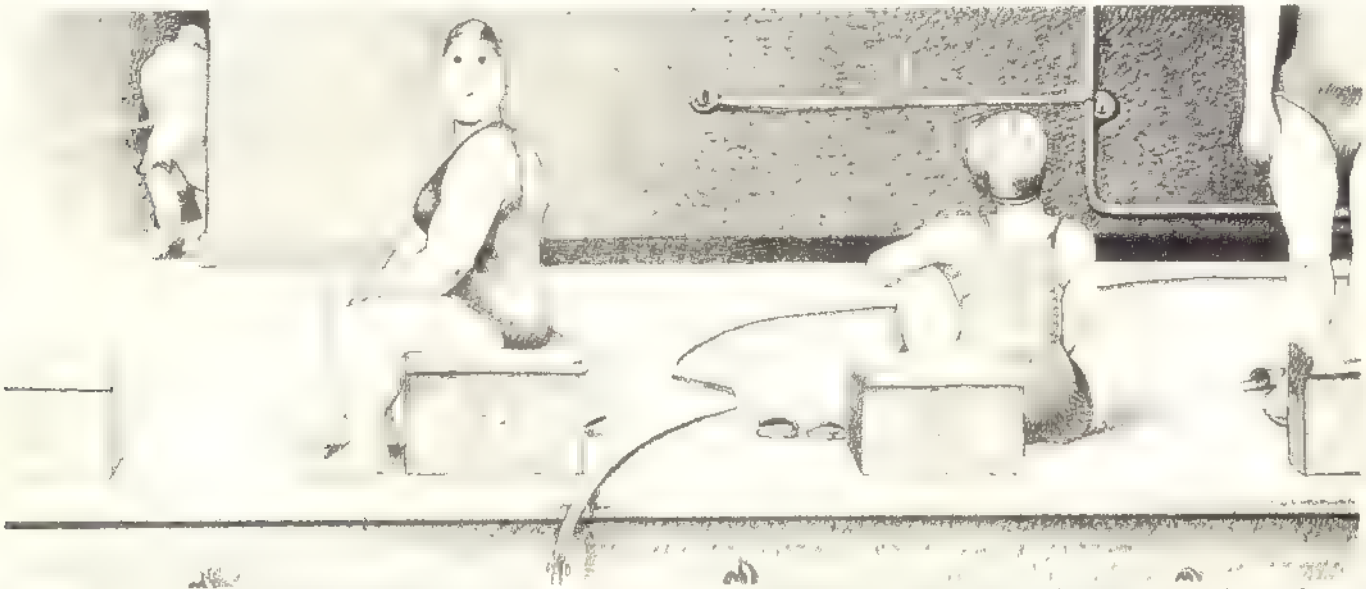
....IN A FEW MOMENTS WE'LL BE BROADCASTING FROM THE GORKY OLIMPIC POOL FOR THE WOMEN'S SWIMMING FINALS. WE'LL BE WATCHING THE 200 BUTTERFLY STOKE AND



THE 100 FREE STYLE. IN THE INDIVIDUAL SPECIALTIES THERE IS AN ABSOLUTE CHAMPION, THE UNSURPASSED

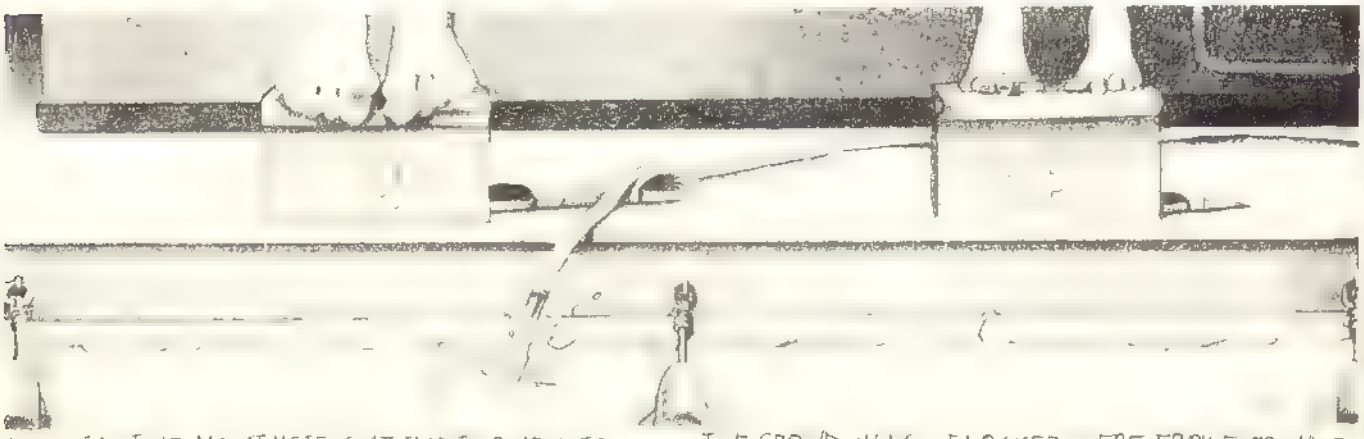
VALENTINA VASKONOVA FROM THE USSR THIS ATHLETE WHO IS SAID

TO BE OF KURDISH BACKGROUND, IS THE REVELATION OF THIS SEASON.....



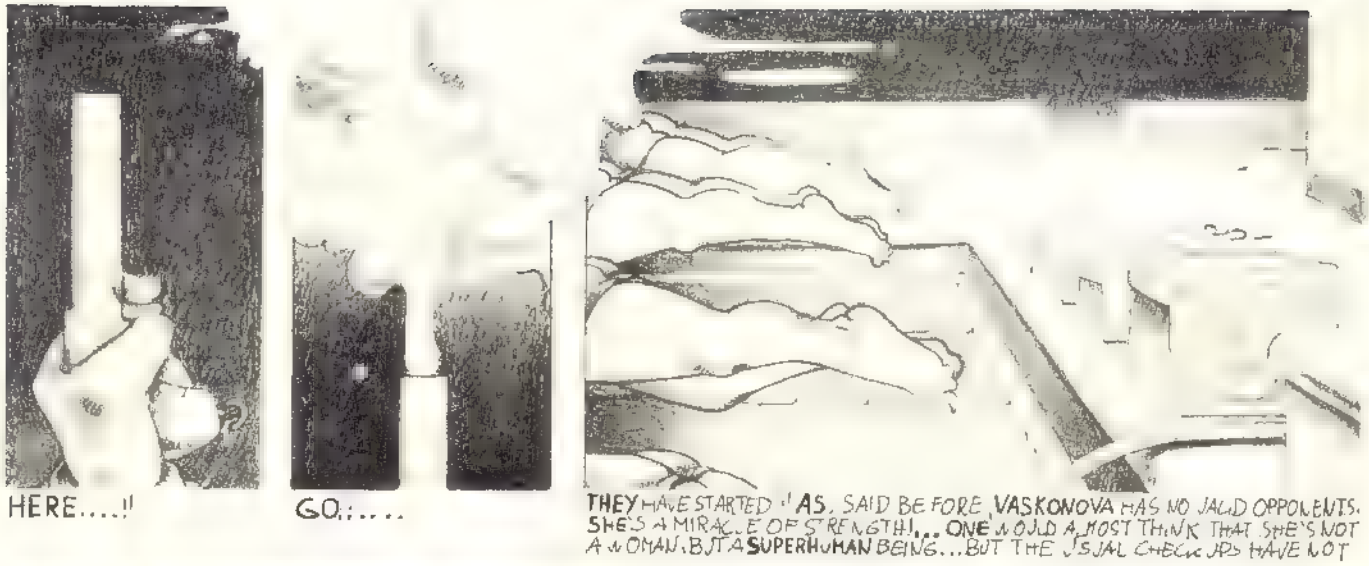
SHE IS IN FACT THE ACCLAIMED WINNER OF THE EUROPEAN SWIMMING CHAMPIONSHIP, WHERE SHE ANNIHILATED HER OPPONENTS

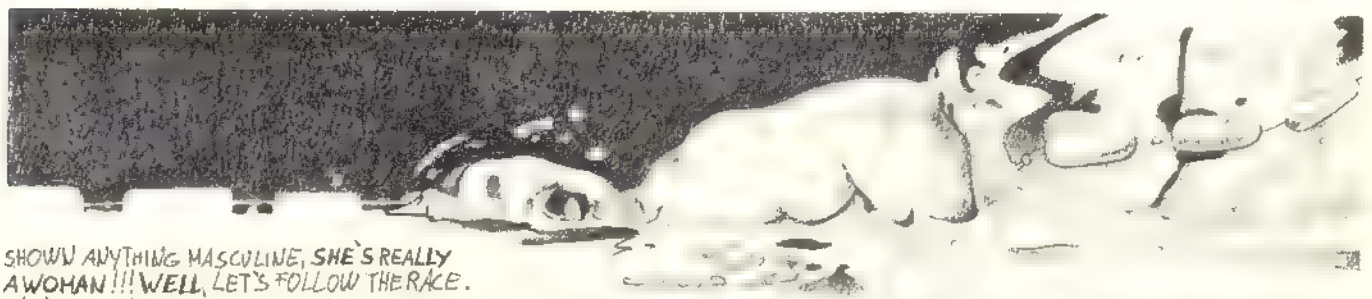
BY WINNING WITH INCREDIBLE MARGINS BOTH IN THE 100 FREE STYLE AND IN THE 200 BACKSTOKE.....

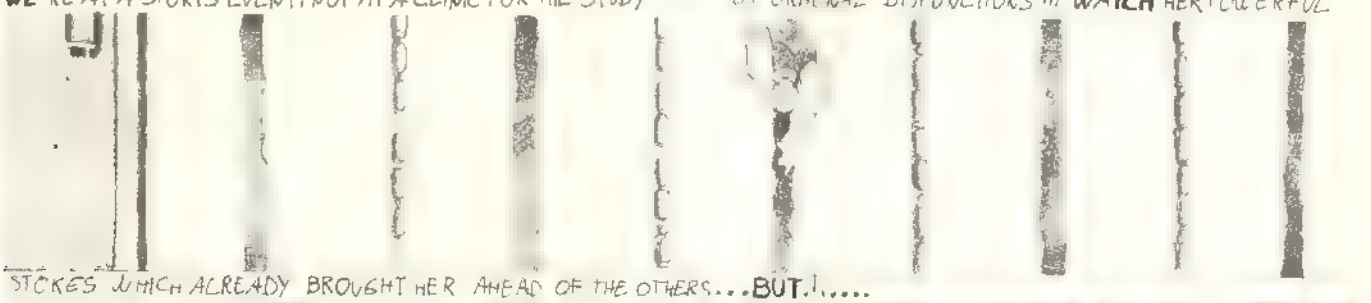


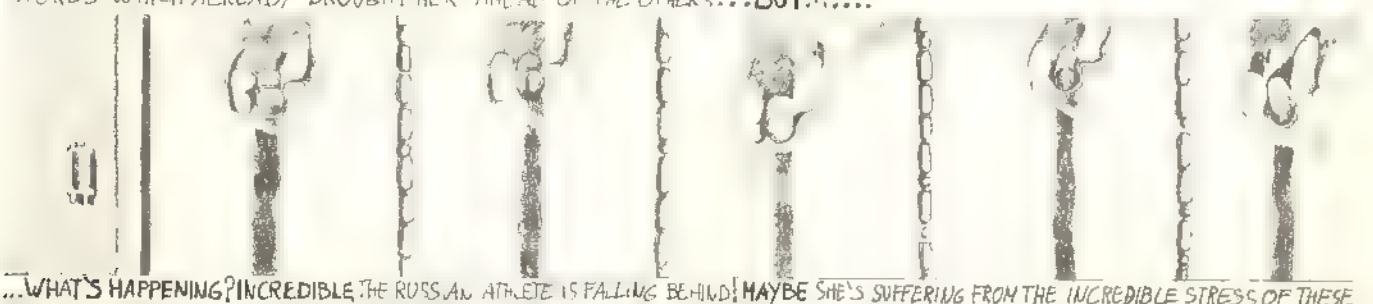
THEY SAY THAT NO ATHLETE IS AT THIS TIME ABLE TO COMPLETE WITH HER. CLEARLY ALL THE EYES OF

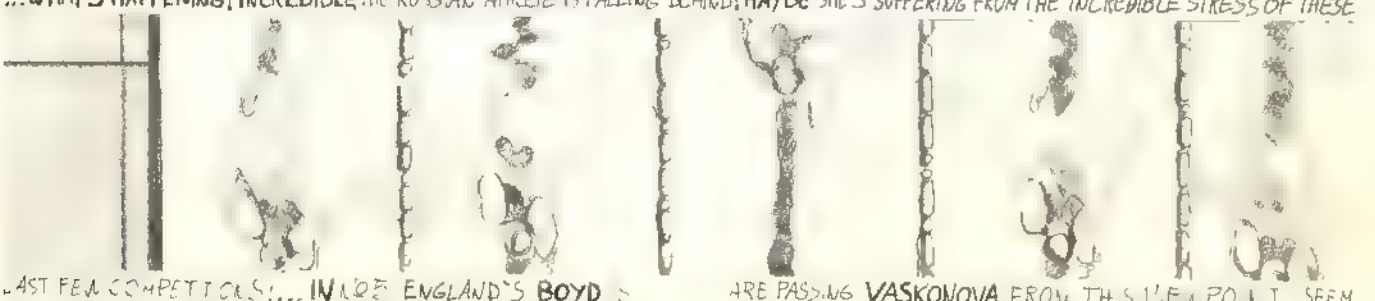
THE CROWD WHICH FLOCKED HERE FROM EVERYWHERE IN THE SOVIET UNION ARE FOCUSED ON HER.....


HERE....!!
GO.;....
THEY HAVE STARTED ! AS SAID BEFORE VASKONOVA HAS NO JALID OPPONENTS. SHE'S A MIRACLE OF STRENGTH!... ONE WOULD ALMOST THINK THAT SHE'S NOT A WOMAN, BUT A SUPERHUMAN BEING...BUT THE USUAL CHECK UPS HAVE NOT


SHOWN ANYTHING MASCULINE, SHE'S REALLY A WOMAN!!! WELL, LET'S FOLLOW THE RACE. WE'RE AT A SPORTS EVENT, NOT AT A CLINIC FOR THE STUDY OF ORMONAL DISFUNCTIONS !!! WATCH HER POWERFUL


STROKES WHICH ALREADY BROUGHT HER AHEAD OF THE OTHERS...BUT.!.....

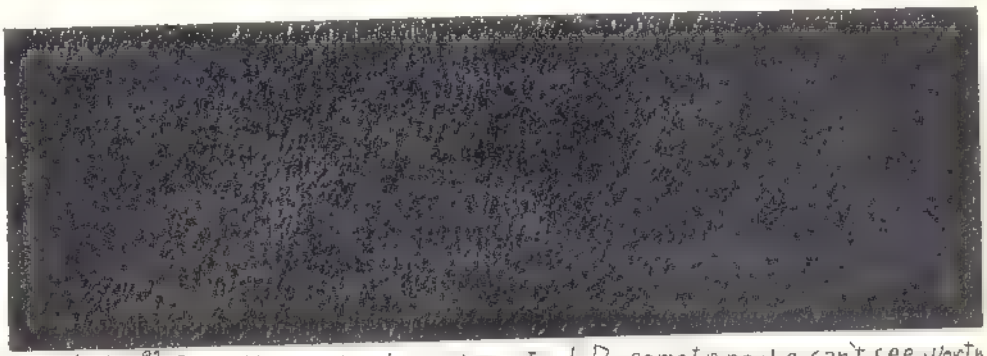

...WHAT'S HAPPENING? INCREDIBLE THE RUSSIAN ATHLETE IS FALLING BEHIND! MAYBE SHE'S SUFFERING FROM THE INCREDIBLE STRESS OF THESE


LAST FEW COMPETITIONS!... IN FACT ENGLAND'S BOYD IS AHEAD OF THE OTHERS !! SENSATIONAL ! ALL THE ATHLETES ARE PASSING VASKONOVA, FROM THIS VIEWPOINT SEEM TO NOTICE A CERTAIN NERVOUSNESS ON THE PART.....

TRAINERS .... GOS!!! IT IS REALLY SOMETHING SERIOUS!!!

THIS IS SOMETHING WHICH HAS REALLY NEVER HAPPENED BEFORE!!..... QUICK... QUICK...!! DO....

. SOMETHING!!!



By what !!!? The lights went out, goddamn it ..! Do something, we can't see worth a shit !... What the hell... Right at a moment like this !!....

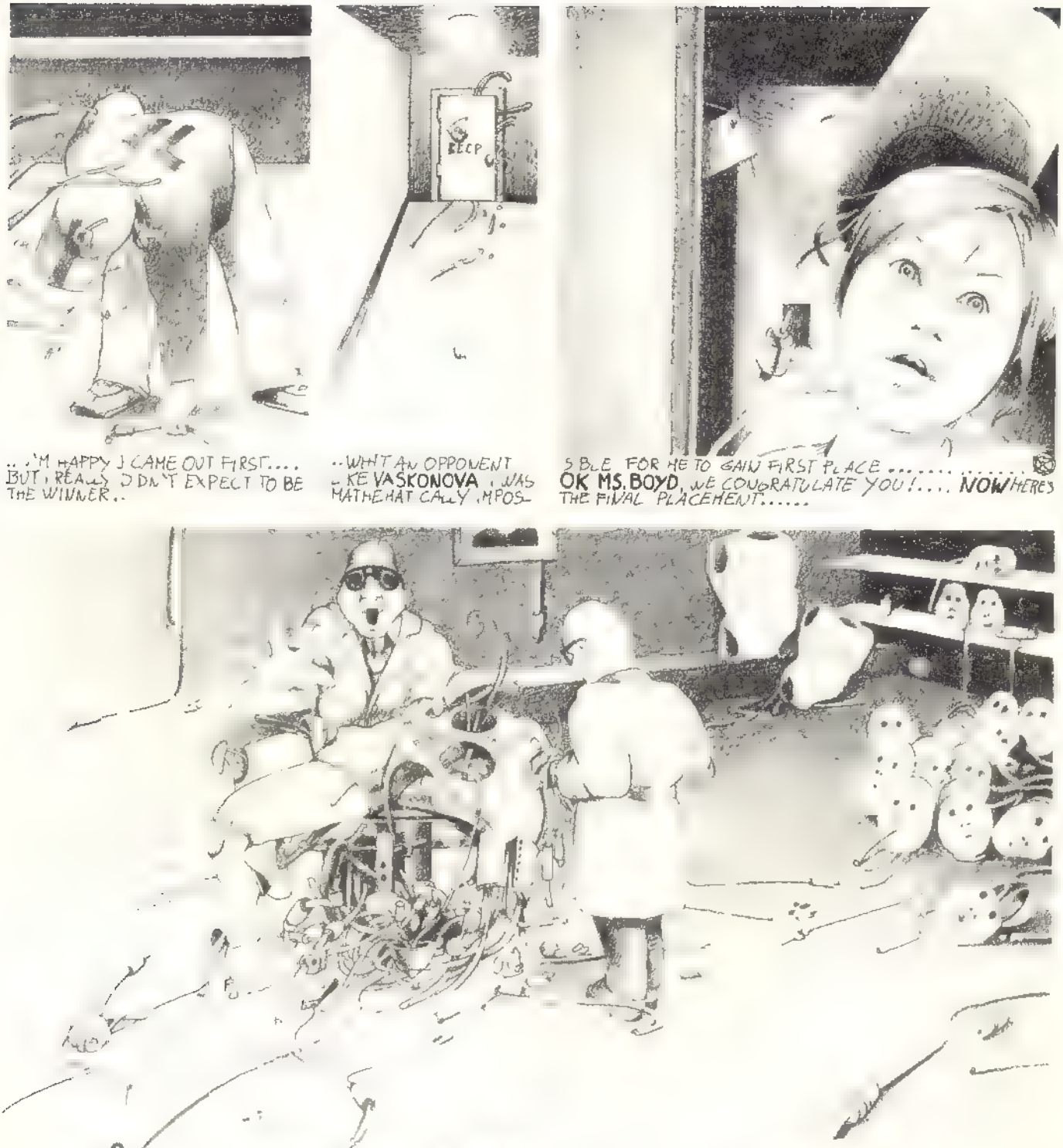
LADIES AND GENTELMEN FORGIVE THE INTERRUPTION... WE DON'T KNOW WHAT HAPPENED... MAYBE A MAGNETIC STORM ON THE SATELLITE BROADCAST....

.... FIRST AID IS BEING GIVEN TO THE UNFORTUNATE SWIMMER.... WE HOPE IT'S NOTHING SERIOUS !.... ....

HERE THE NEW OLYMPIC CHAMPION, MS. BOYD, COMES TOWARDS US ACCOMPANIED BY HER....

... TRAINERS .. OK MS. BOYD WHAT DID YOU

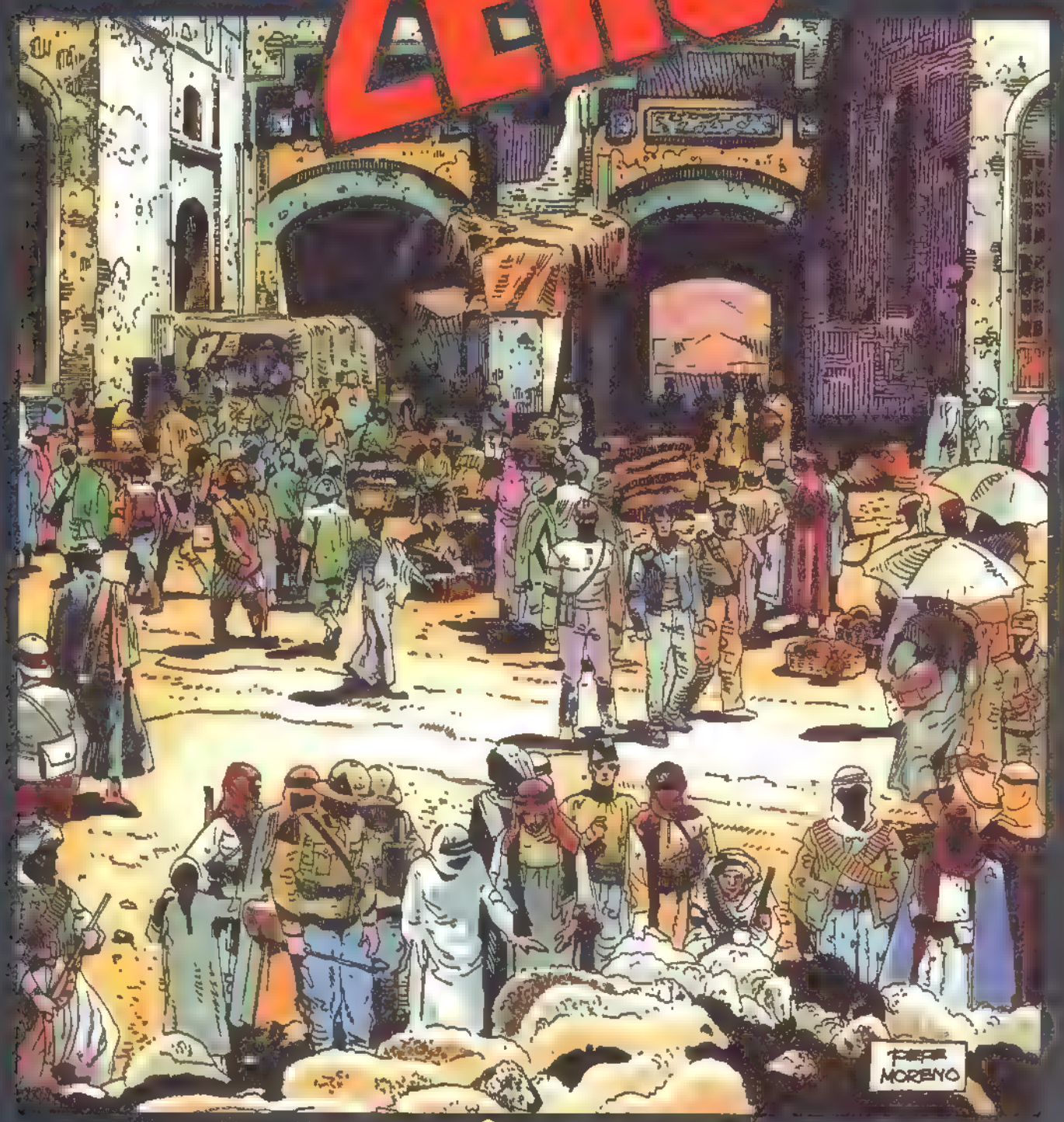
THINK OF THIS COMPETITION?.... OH, WELL....


..I'M HAPPY I CAME OUT FIRST.... BUT, REALLY, I DON'T EXPECT TO BE THE WINNER..
..WHAT AN OPPONENT - KE VASKONOVA, WAS MATHEMATICALLY IMPOS-
SIBLE FOR HE TO GAIN FIRST PLACE.....
OK MS. BOYD, WE CONGRATULATE YOU!.... NOW HERES THE FINAL PLACEMENT.....
1º Sara BOYD GB 1'1"11
2º Romy STRESS AU 1'1"12
3º Darya PORS DDR 1'1"13
...SO SARA BOYD WAS ABLE TO BEAT SO TO SPEAK STRONG VALENTINA VASKONOVA..... LADIES AND GENTLEMAN, GEORGE SPINN FROM MOSCOW HAS JUST BROADCASTED AN INCREDIBLE THING. GOOD EVENING.

AUTORS' NOTE:

A BODY IMMERSED IN A LIQUID RECEIVES AN UPWARD PUSH EQUAL TO THE WEIGHT OF THE LIQUID IT HAS MOVED.... RIGHT.??
...By the way .. If you must immerse something or somebody in a liquid, make sure every hole is stopped.

GENERATION ZERO



RAT'S NEST

TIME REALLY FLIES WHEN YOU'RE HAVING FUN. FOR THREE EXPLORERS LOOKING FOR PARADISE IN A WORLD RIPPED BY NUCLEAR WARFARE. .
. . TIME LIMPS ON DISEASED LEGS. ENDLESS MONTHS DRAIN ALL SPECTACLE FROM THE SIGHT OF DESTRUCTION. . .
. . . LEAVING ONLY WASTE
ITALY, JOHNNY. . . ITALY! BEFORE THE EASTERN ZONE PERMANENTLY CLOSED ITS BORDERS MY PARENTS BROUGHT ME HERE TO SEE MT. VESUVIUS!
YEAH, WELL. . . IT'S ALL LAVA NOW, KUBE. I'M BEGINNING TO THINK THERE'S NO PLACE WHERE NORTHOLD AND SEAHAVEN CAN MOVE.
YOUR UNCLE IS AN EFFICIENT MAN HE'LL JUST KEEP THEM ENLARGING THAT HOLE IN ICELAND
BUT SEAHAVEN IS A SMALL ISLAND! PERFECTION. . . WITH NOWHERE TO EXPAND. YOU AGREE, DANCER . . ?
SURE. GUESS WE ALL FOUND MORE TO CARE ABOUT THERE THAN ANYWHERE ELSE
LIANA. .

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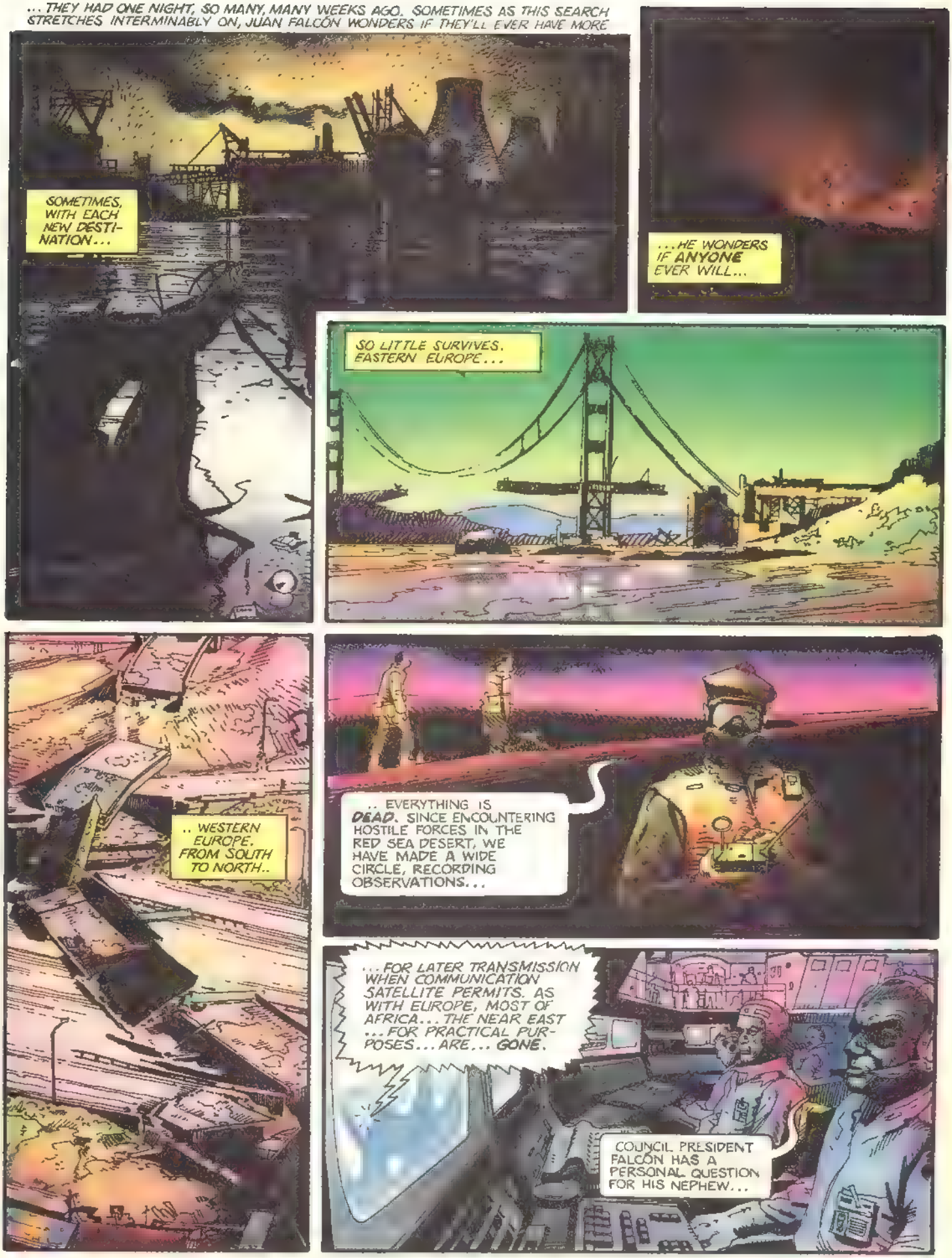
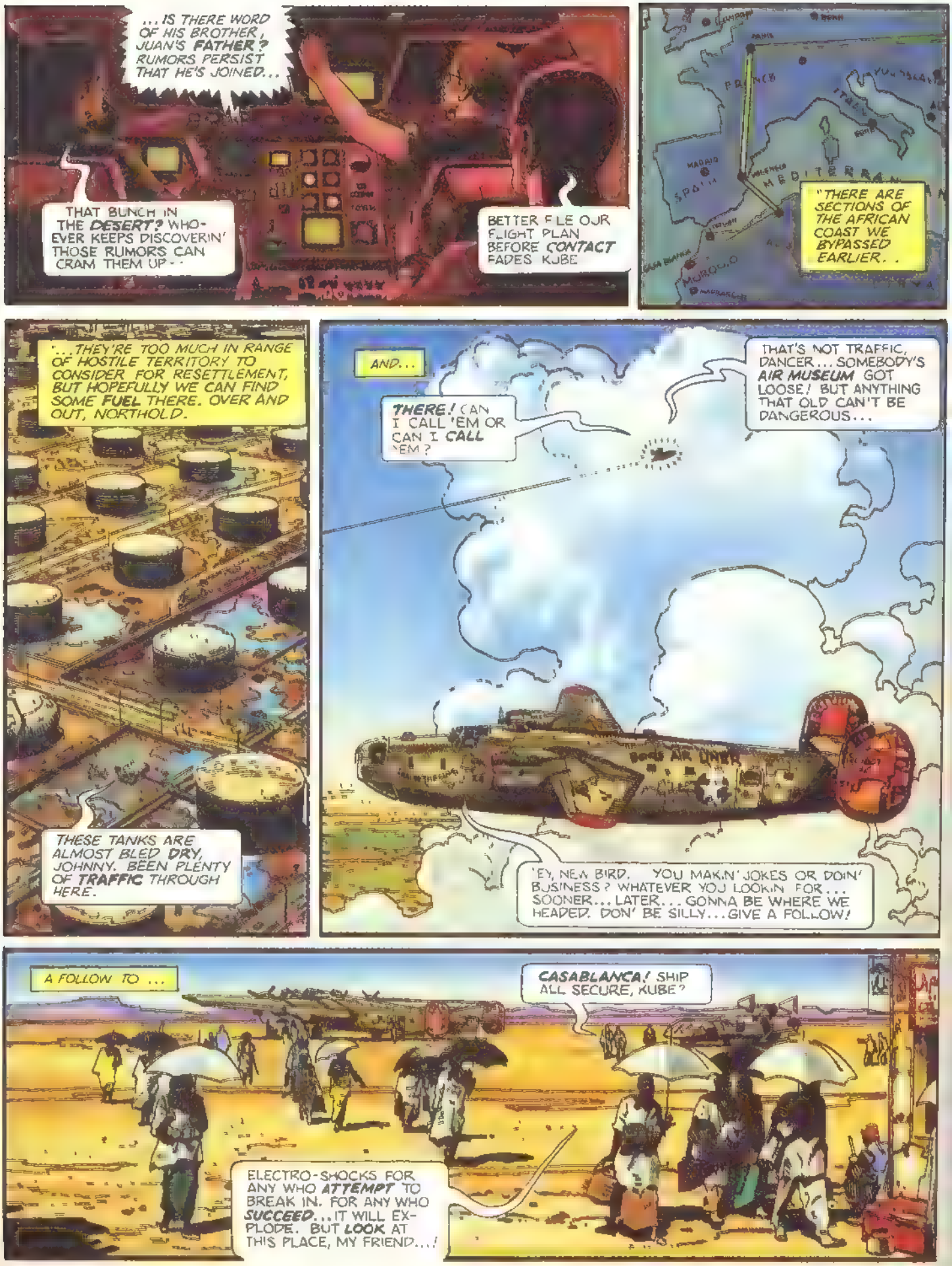
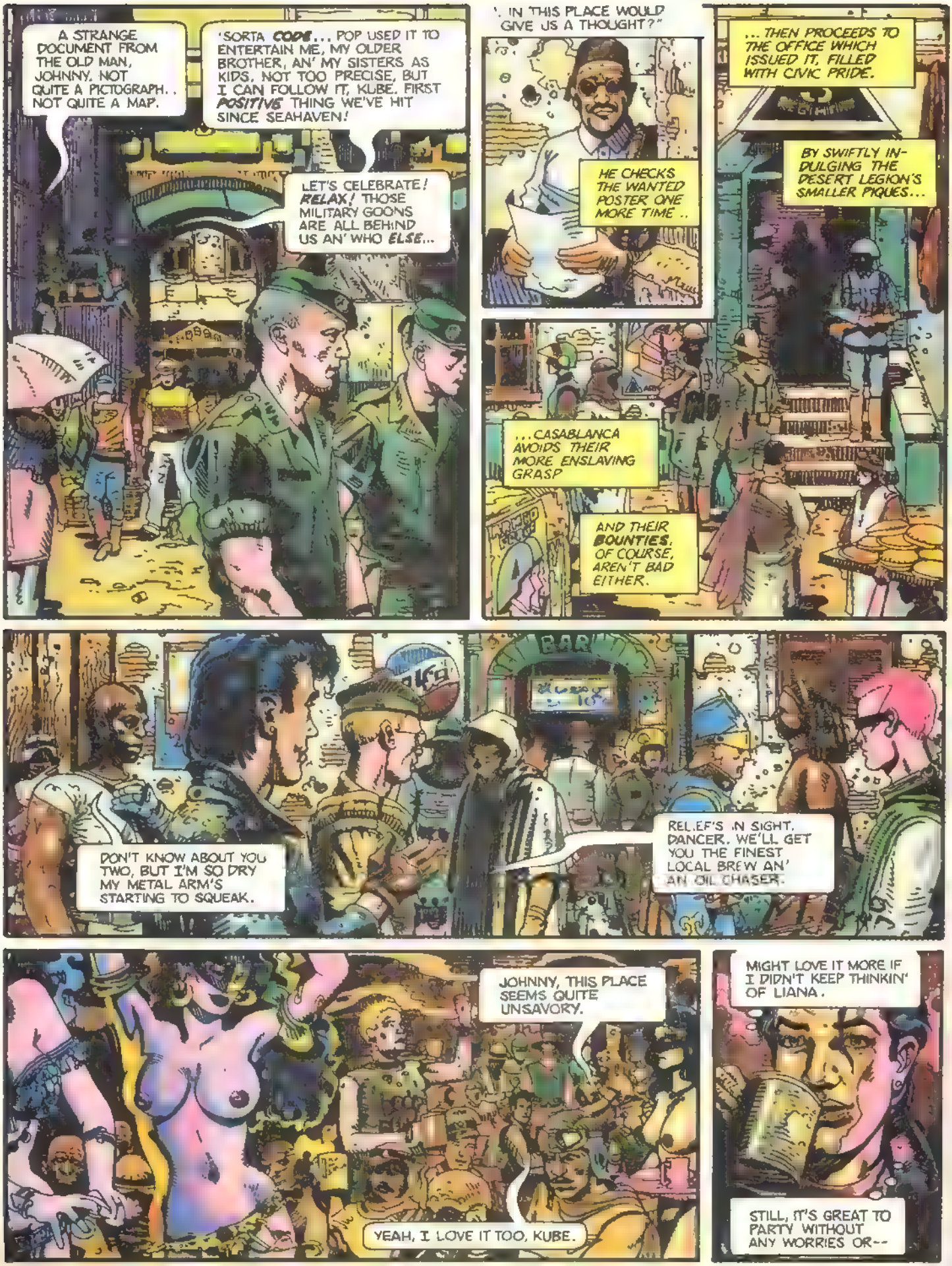

...THEY HAD ONE NIGHT, SO MANY, MANY WEEKS AGO. SOMETIMES AS THIS SEARCH STRETCHES INTERMINABLY ON, JUAN FALCÓN WONDERS IF THEY'LL EVER HAVE MORE
SOMETIMES, WITH EACH NEW DESTINATION...
...HE WONDERS IF ANYONE EVER WILL...
SO LITTLE SURVIVES. EASTERN EUROPE...
.. WESTERN EUROPE. FROM SOUTH TO NORTH..
.. EVERYTHING IS DEAD. SINCE ENCOUNTERING HOSTILE FORCES IN THE RED SEA DESERT, WE HAVE MADE A WIDE CIRCLE, RECORDING OBSERVATIONS...
...FOR LATER TRANSMISSION WHEN COMMUNICATION SATELLITE PERMITS. AS WITH EUROPE, MOST OF AFRICA... THE NEAR EAST ...FOR PRACTICAL PURPOSES... ARE... GONE.
COUNCIL PRESIDENT FALCÓN HAS A PERSONAL QUESTION FOR HIS NEPHEW...

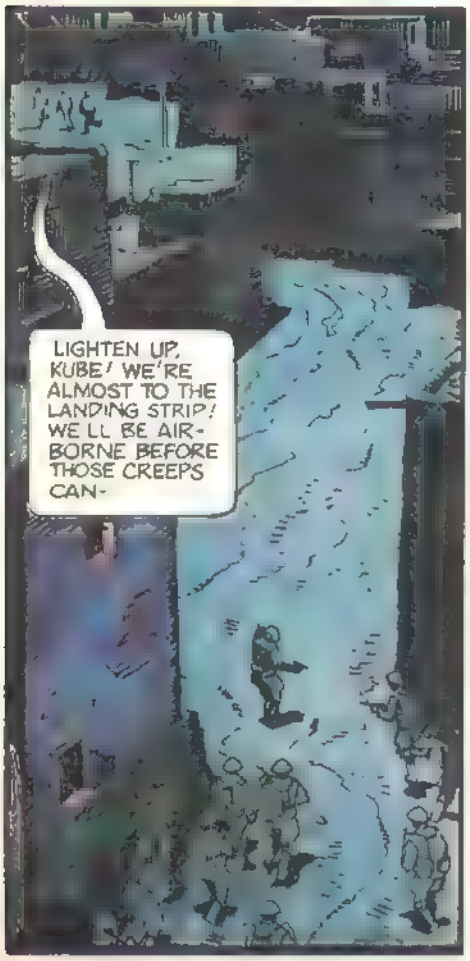

...IS THERE WORD OF HIS BROTHER, JUAN'S FATHER? RUMORS PERSIST THAT HE'S JOINED...
THAT BUNCH IN THE DESERT? WHOEVER KEEPS DISCOVERIN' THOSE RUMORS CAN CRAM THEM UP--
BETTER FILE OUR FLIGHT PLAN BEFORE CONTACT FADES KUBE
"THERE ARE SECTIONS OF THE AFRICAN COAST WE BYPASSED EARLIER..
"...THEY'RE TOO MUCH IN RANGE OF HOSTILE TERRITORY TO CONSIDER FOR RESETTLEMENT, BUT HOPEFULLY WE CAN FIND SOME FUEL THERE. OVER AND OUT, NORTHOLD.
THESE TANKS ARE ALMOST BLED DRY, JOHNNY. BEEN PLENTY OF TRAFFIC THROUGH HERE.
AND...
THERE! CAN I CALL 'EM OR CAN I CALL 'EM?
THAT'S NOT TRAFFIC, DANCER... SOMEBODY'S AIR MUSEUM GOT LOOSE! BUT ANYTHING THAT OLD CAN'T BE DANGEROUS...
'EY, NEW BIRD. YOU MAKIN' JOKES OR DOIN' BUSINESS? WHATEVER YOU LOOKIN FOR... SOONER... LATER... GONNA BE WHERE WE HEADED. DON' BE SILLY... GIVE A FOLLOW!
A FOLLOW TO ...
CASABLANCA! SHIP ALL SECURE, KUBE?
ELECTRO-SHOCKS FOR ANY WHO ATTEMPT TO BREAK IN. FOR ANY WHO SUCCEED... IT WILL EXPLODE. BUT LOOK AT THIS PLACE, MY FRIEND...!

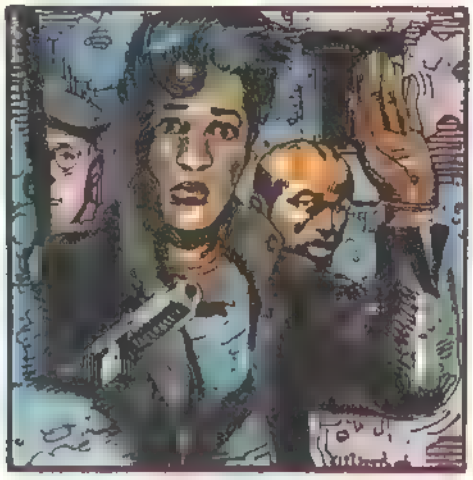
IT IS NOT A COMMUNITY. IT IS A MAGNET OF DIVERSITY, DRAWING INDIVIDUAL SURVIVORS FROM FAR AND WIDE. A NEUTRAL GROUND FOR THE PURSUIT OF PROFIT AND PLEASURE.
Y'KNOW, I THINK THIS IS OUR KIND'A PLACE. WE NEED A BREAK AN'--
M'SEU...? SIGNOR ..? YOUR PARDON, BUT ARE YOU NOT THE ONE WHOSE NAME IS LIKE THAT OF THE HUNTING BIRD? ARE YOU NOT THE FALCÓN?
THE OLD ONE HAS ME WATCH ALL NEW ARRIVALS. HE HAS WAITED LONG FOR YOU TO COME. HE HAS THE WORD OF YOUR FATHER.
M-MY... KUBE! DANCER! DUNNO HOW ANYBODY COULD KNOW ABOUT ME HERE. EVEN IF IT'S A TRICK...WE'RE GOIN' WITH THE KID!
IT IS NOT THAT FAR. AND IT IS NOT A TRAP.
WAITING IS A MAN AGED, CRIPPLED, NEARLY BLIND. A MAN WITH A TASK...
I TRAVELED FROM NORTHOLD WITH YOUR FATHER, JUAN FALCÓN. HE ALWAYS SAID IF ANY WERE TO FOLLOW, SURELY IT WOULD BE YOU. I WAS TO GIVE YOU SOMETHING.
MY INJURIES FORCED HIM TO LEAVE ME HERE. HE CAME BACK ONCE...LEAVING THIS. HE'S A WILD, FREE SPIRIT...BUT I LOVE HIM. FOR ME...
...IT IS TOO LATE TO REJOIN HIM BUT PERHAPS YOU CAN ..FOR BOTH OF US.

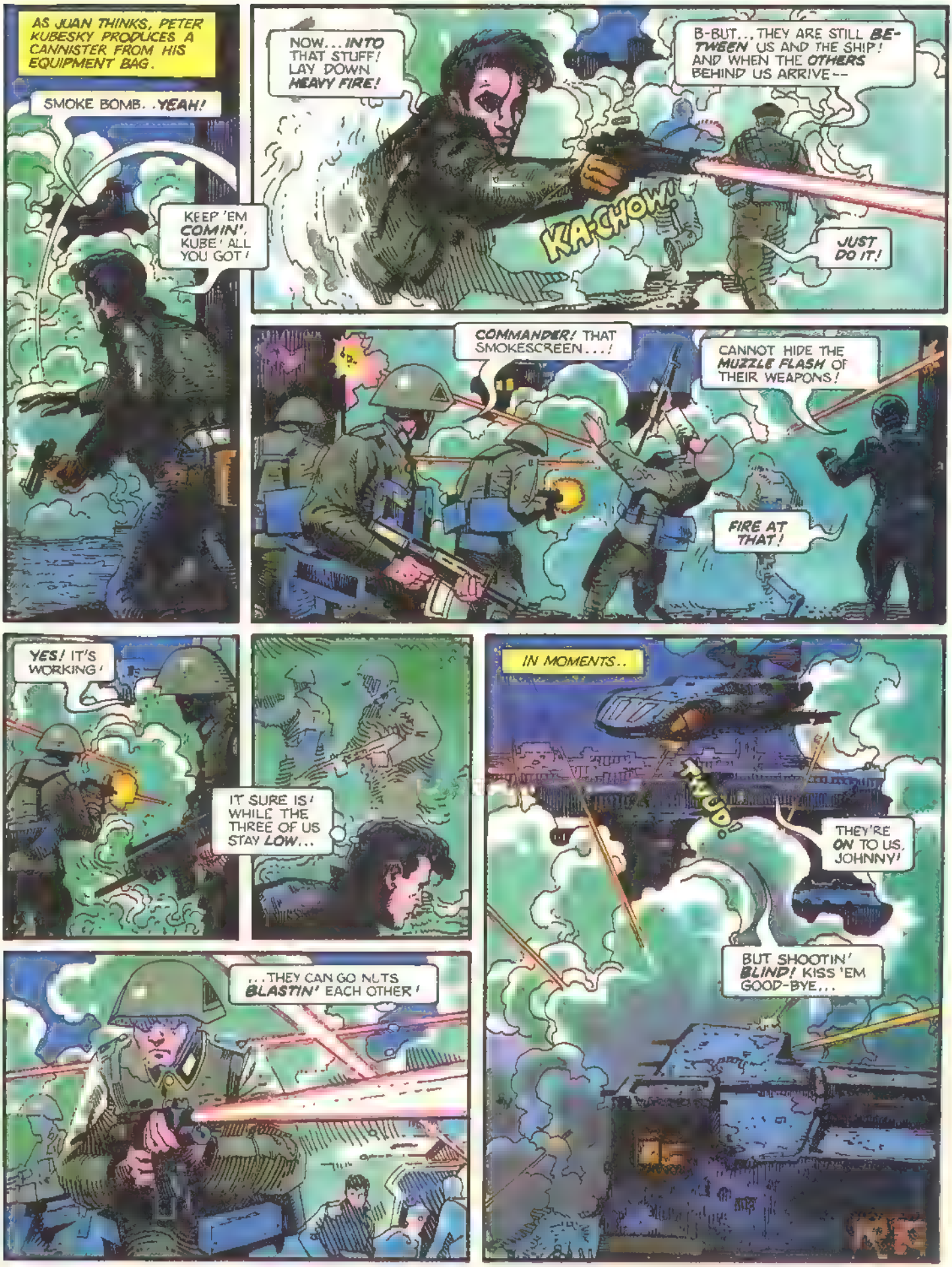

A STRANGE DOCUMENT FROM THE OLD MAN, JOHNNY. NOT QUITE A PICTOGRAPH.. NOT QUITE A MAP.
'SORTA CODE... POP USED IT TO ENTERTAIN ME, MY OLDER BROTHER, AN' MY SISTERS AS KIDS. NOT TOO PRECISE, BUT I CAN FOLLOW IT, KUBE. FIRST POSITIVE THING WE'VE HIT SINCE SEAHAVEN!
LET'S CELEBRATE! RELAX! THOSE MILITARY GOONS ARE ALL BEHIND US AN' WHO ELSE...
'. IN THIS PLACE WOULD GIVE US A THOUGHT?"
HE CHECKS THE WANTED POSTER ONE MORE TIME ..
... THEN PROCEEDS TO THE OFFICE WHICH ISSUED IT, FILLED WITH CIVIC PRIDE.
BY SWIFTLY INDULGING THE DESERT LEGION'S SMALLER PIQUES...
...CASABLANCA AVOIDS THEIR MORE ENSLAVING GRASP
AND THEIR BOUNTIES, OF COURSE, AREN'T BAD EITHER.
BAR
DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU TWO, BUT I'M SO DRY MY METAL ARM'S STARTING TO SQUEAK.
RELIEF'S IN SIGHT, DANCER. WE'LL GET YOU THE FINEST LOCAL BREW AN' AN OIL CHASER.
JOHNNY, THIS PLACE SEEMS QUITE UNSAVORY.
YEAH, I LOVE IT TOO, KUBE.
MIGHT LOVE IT MORE IF I DIDN'T KEEP THINKIN' OF LIANA.
STILL, IT'S GREAT TO PARTY WITHOUT ANY WORRIES OR--

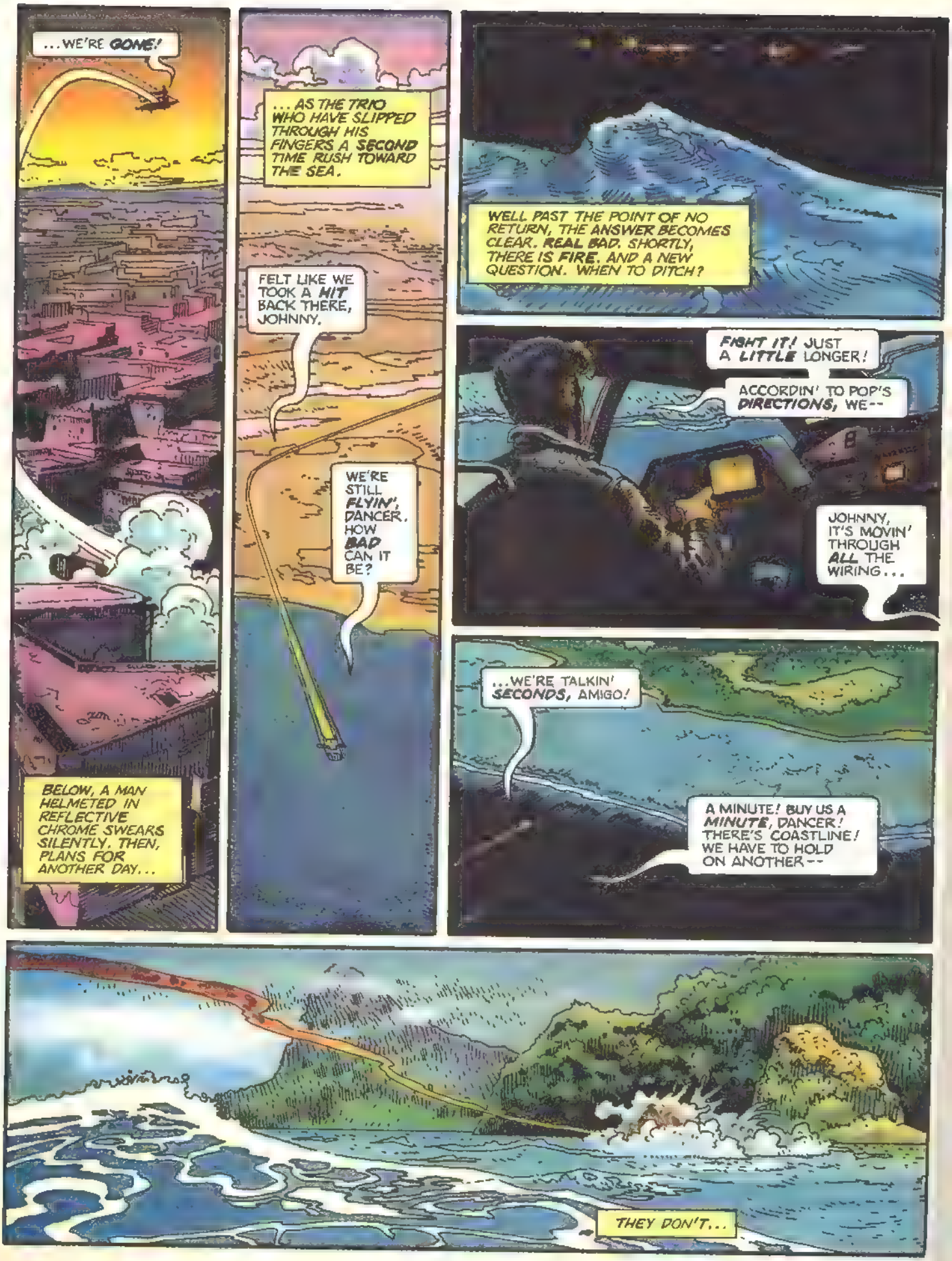
WARNED YOU ABOUT GULPIN' THIS STUFF, JUAN. BEST TO WAIT A FEW SECONDS BEFORE DOWNIN IT... ALLOW IT TO AGE.
DANCER, DON'T YOU AN' KUBE TURN AROUND OR DO ANY-THING TOO OBVIOUS...
.. LEAVE THAT TO ME!
WRAM!
MERDÉ!
HO! 'BOUT TIME THINGS LIVENED UP!
SOMEBODY'S GONNA DIE! MAYBE EVERY-BODY! STARTIN WITH--
WATCH THAT ARM, SKINHEAD! I'LL--
THERE! THE ONES WE WANT! GET THEM BEFORE--
FTAM!
PLOK!
CHAOS ERUPTS! AND IN THAT CHAOS THREE FIGURES RETREAT WITH SMALL DIGNITY AND GREAT HASTE...

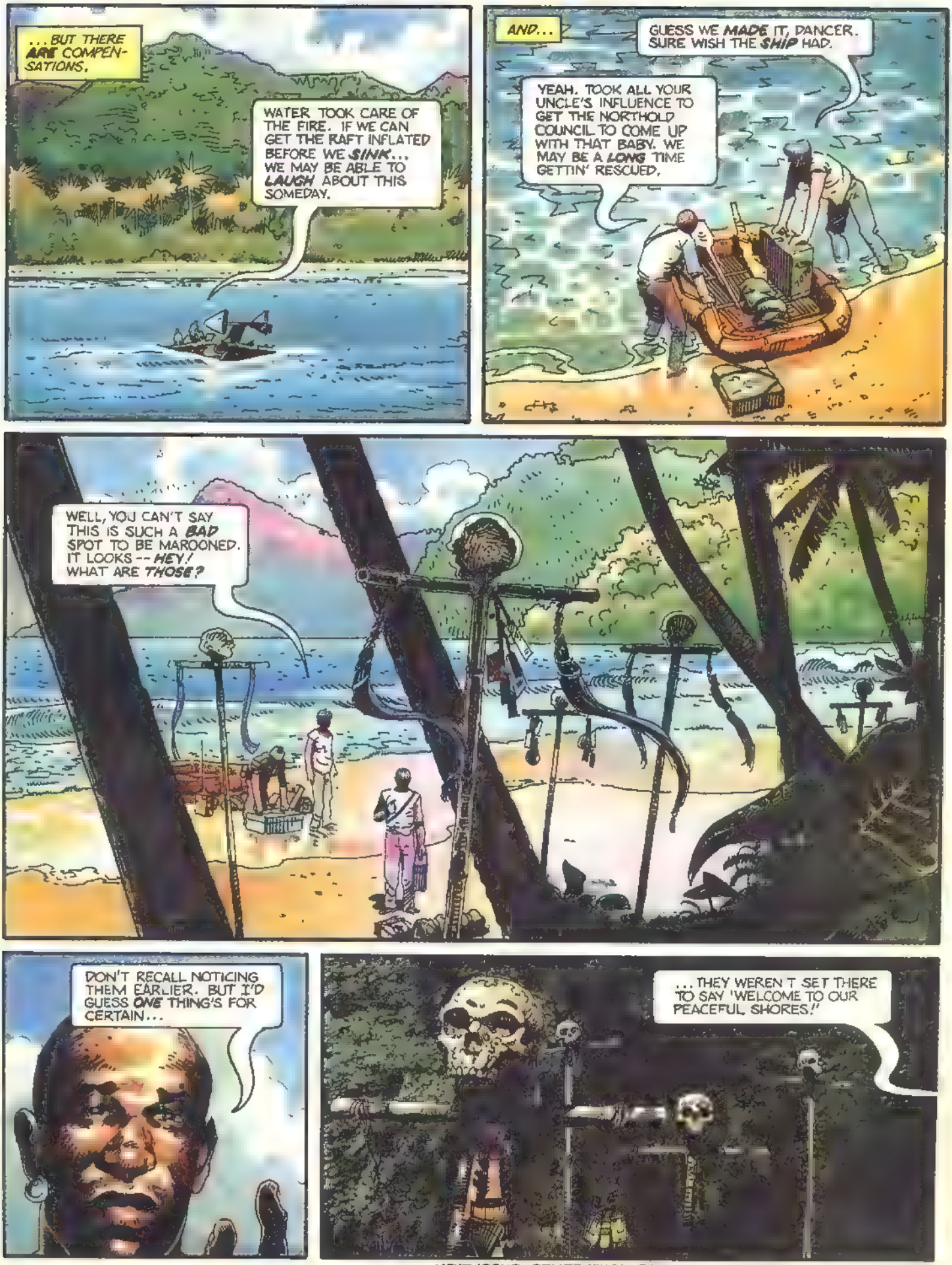
... AND FAR FROM UNDETECTED!






AS JUAN THINKS, PETER KUBESKY PRODUCES A CANNISTER FROM HIS EQUIPMENT BAG.
SMOKE BOMB. .YEAH!
KEEP 'EM COMIN', KUBE! ALL YOU GOT!
NOW... INTO THAT STUFF! LAY DOWN HEAVY FIRE!
B-BUT.., THEY ARE STILL BE-TWEEN US AND THE SHIP! AND WHEN THE OTHERS BEHIND US ARRIVE--
KA-CHOW!
JUST DO IT!
COMMANDER! THAT SMOKESCREEN...!
CANNOT HIDE THE MUZZLE FLASH OF THEIR WEAPONS!
FIRE AT THAT!
YES! IT'S WORKING!
IT SURE IS! WHILE THE THREE OF US STAY LOW...
IN MOMENTS..
TWOO
THEY'RE ON TO US, JOHNNY!
BUT SHOOTIN' BLIND! KISS 'EM GOOD-BYE...
...THEY CAN GO NUTS BLASTIN' EACH OTHER!


...WE'RE GONE!
BELOW, A MAN HELMETED IN REFLECTIVE CHROME SWEARS SILENTLY, THEN, PLANS FOR ANOTHER DAY...
...AS THE TRIO WHO HAVE SLIPPED THROUGH HIS FINGERS A SECOND TIME RUSH TOWARD THE SEA.
FELT LIKE WE TOOK A HIT BACK THERE, JOHNNY.
WE'RE STILL FLYIN', DANCER. HOW BAD CAN IT BE?
WELL PAST THE POINT OF NO RETURN, THE ANSWER BECOMES CLEAR. REAL BAD. SHORTLY, THERE IS FIRE. AND A NEW QUESTION. WHEN TO DITCH?
FIGHT IT! JUST A LITTLE LONGER!
ACCORDIN' TO POP'S DIRECTIONS, WE--
JOHNNY, IT'S MOVIN' THROUGH ALL THE WIRING...
...WE'RE TALKIN' SECONDS, AMIGO!
A MINUTE! BUY US A MINUTE, DANCER! THERE'S COASTLINE! WE HAVE TO HOLD ON ANOTHER--
THEY DON'T...


...BUT THERE ARE COMPENSATIONS.
WATER TOOK CARE OF THE FIRE. IF WE CAN GET THE RAFT INFLATED BEFORE WE SINK... WE MAY BE ABLE TO LAUGH ABOUT THIS SOMEDAY.
AND...
GUESS WE MADE IT, DANCER. SURE WISH THE SHIP HAD.
YEAH. TOOK ALL YOUR UNCLE'S INFLUENCE TO GET THE NORTHOLD COUNCIL TO COME UP WITH THAT BABY. WE MAY BE A LONG TIME GETTIN' RESCUED.
WELL, YOU CAN'T SAY THIS IS SUCH A BAD SPOT TO BE MAROONED. IT LOOKS -- HEY! WHAT ARE THOSE?
DON'T RECALL NOTICING THEM EARLIER. BUT I'D GUESS ONE THING'S FOR CERTAIN...
...THEY WEREN'T SET THERE TO SAY 'WELCOME TO OUR PEACEFUL SHORES!'

NEXT ISSUE: GENERATION ZERO CONTINUES

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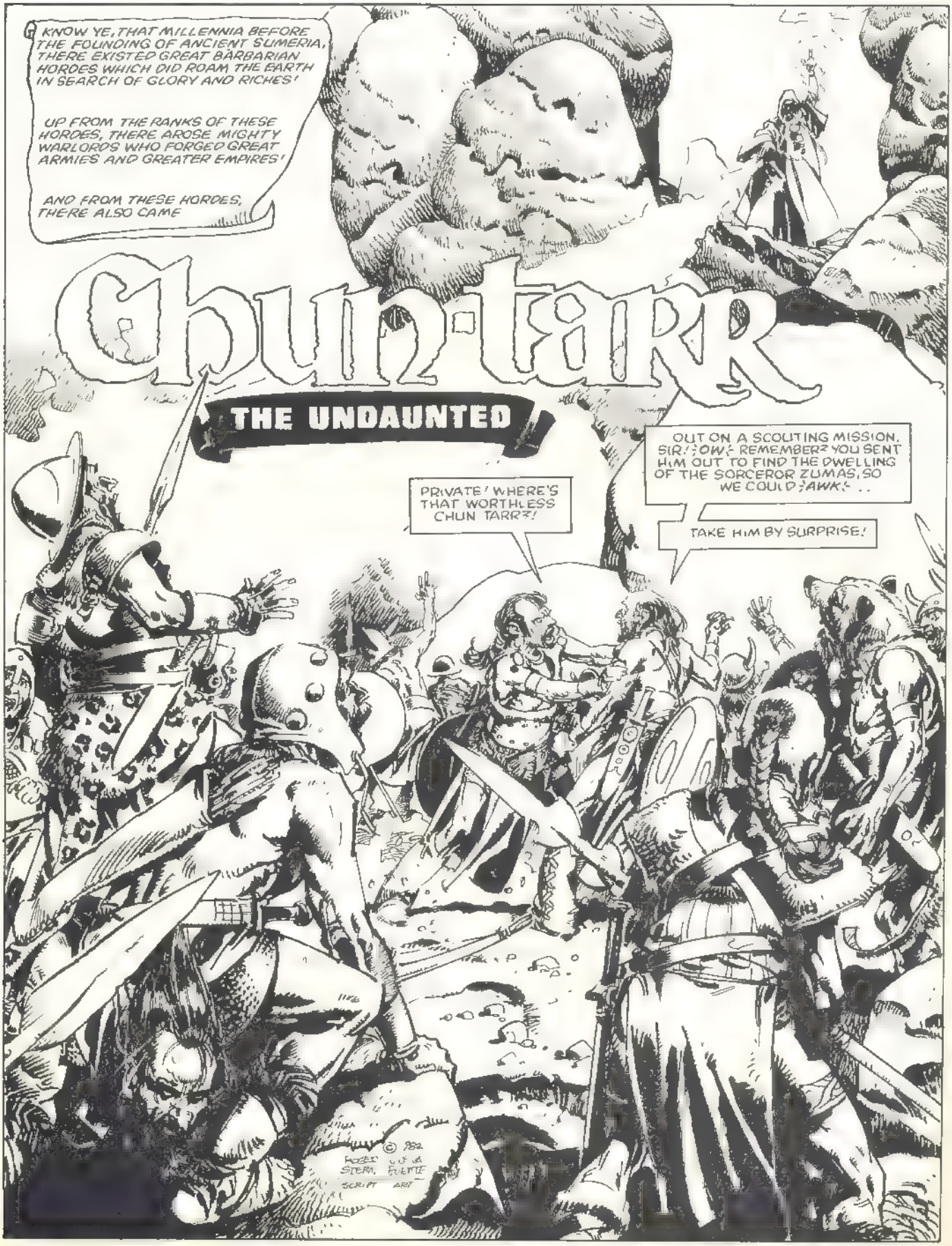
I KNOW YE, THAT MILLENNIA BEFORE THE FOUNDING OF ANCIENT SUMERIA, THERE EXISTED GREAT BARBARIAN HORDES WHICH DID ROAM THE EARTH IN SEARCH OF GLORY AND RICHES!
UP FROM THE RANKS OF THESE HORDES, THERE AROSE MIGHTY WARLORDS WHO FORGED GREAT ARMIES AND GREATER EMPIRES!
AND FROM THESE HORDES, THERE ALSO CAME
Chun-Tarr
THE UNDAUNTED
PRIVATE! WHERE'S THAT WORTHLESS CHUN TARR?!
OUT ON A SCOUTING MISSION, SIR! ;OW! REMEMBER? YOU SENT HIM OUT TO FIND THE DWELLING OF THE SORCEROR ZUMAS, SO WE COULD ;AWK! . .
TAKE HIM BY SURPRISE!
© '82
ROGER STERN, SCRIPT
VICTOR DE LA FUENTE, ART

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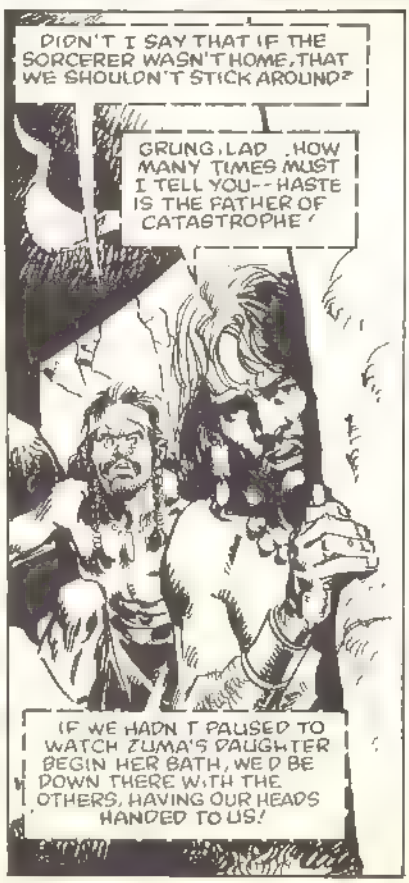
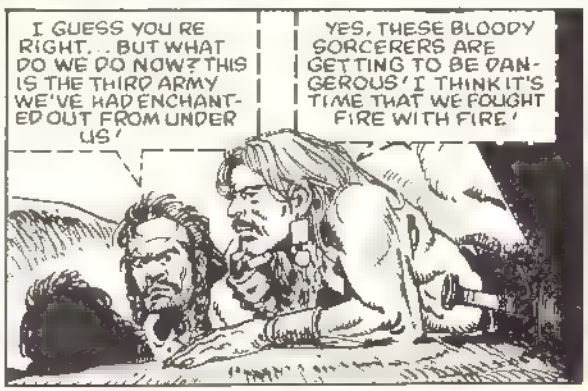
THANKS TO HIS SLOTHFULNESS, WE'VE LOST THE SURPRISE, AND ZUMAS HAS GAINED IT!
BAH! I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN BETTER THAN TO USE THAT IDIOT AS A SCOUT!
RETREAT! FALL BACK AND SAVE YOURSELVES!

AND, AT THE TOP OF THE CRAGGY PEAK

DAMN BARBARIANS! THOUGHT THEY COULD PUT ONE OVER ON OLD ZUMAS, DIDN'T THEY?
PFAW! I KNEW THEY WERE COMING DAYS AGO... THE BLASTED CROWS TOLD ME!
WHEN WILL THEY LEARN--

- THAT YOU CAN'T SNEAK UP ON SOMEONE WHO TALKS TO BIRDS!
OH, CHUN-TARR--WE'RE IN TROUBLE AGAIN!
I TOLDJA WE SHOULDA HURRIED BACK TO CAMP, SOON AS WE FOUND THE OLD GUY'S HOUSE!


DIDN'T I SAY THAT IF THE SORCERER WASN'T HOME, THAT WE SHOULDN'T STICK AROUND?
GRUNG, LAD, HOW MANY TIMES MUST I TELL YOU--HASTE IS THE FATHER OF CATASTROPHE!
IF WE HADN'T PAUSED TO WATCH ZUMA'S DAUGHTER BEGIN HER BATH, WE'D BE DOWN THERE WITH THE OTHERS, HAVING OUR HEADS HANDED TO US!


I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT... BUT WHAT DO WE DO NOW? THIS IS THE THIRD ARMY WE'VE HAD ENCHANTED OUT FROM UNDER US!
YES, THESE BLOODY SORCERERS ARE GETTING TO BE DANGEROUS! I THINK IT'S TIME THAT WE FOUGHT FIRE WITH FIRE!

AND, AS CHUN-TARR AND HIS FRIEND SKULK OFF INTO THE DARKNESS.
RUN, YOU STUPID SAVAGES! RUN!
YOU COME BACK AROUND HERE, AND I'LL DO MORE THAN JUST BLISTER YOUR BEHINDS!
I SWEAR, YOU PUT A BUNCH OF MORONS TOGETHER, AND THEY THINK THEY'RE AN ARMY!
IT'S GETTING SO A BODY HAS TO DEFEND HIMSELF CONSTANTLY IT'S NOT LIKE THE OLD DAYS!
EVER SINCE ATLANTIS SUNK, THE WHOLE WORLD'S GONE TO HELL!
EH? NOW WHAT DO THOSE STUPID BIRDS WANT?
CAW CAW
HOLD STILL, WILL YOU? THO' I BE OLD AND MY BONES CREAK, GODS, HEAR MY PLEA, LET THIS BIRD SPEAK!
;CAW!- TROUBLE AT THE HOUSE OF ZUMAS;CAW!-
WHAT?!

:CAW!: HEY, WATCH IT! :CAW!:
DAMNATION! I KNEW I SHOULD HAVE INVESTED SOME TIME IN CONJURING A HOME-PROTECTION SPELL!
IF ANYONE'S HARMED LIVIA, I SWEAR I'LL TURN 'EM INTO NEWTS!
SLAM
WHAT IN THE SEVEN HELLS OF PURGATION--!?
HELLO, OLD TIMER! I MUST SAY THAT YOU KEEP YOUR LARDER WELL STOCKED!
:BURRPP!:
CHUN-TARR OF MUUKERIA BIDS YOU WELCOME!
OH, IF YOU'RE THINKING OF USING YOUR MAGIC AGAINST ME--DON'T!
OTHERWISE, YOU SEE, MY FRIEND GRUNG WILL BE FORCED TO COMMIT AN ACT OF SENSELESS VIOLENCE UPON YOUR FAIR DAUGHTER!
WOULDN'T YOU GRUNG?
WHATEVER YOU SAY, CHUN TARR

YOU DAMNED, STUPID BARBARIAN! WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME?
NOT MUCH AT ALL! I'VE SEEN A FEW OF YOU SORCERERS IN ACTION -- AND YOU'RE REAL GOOD! ARMIES BOLT AND RUN BEFORE YOU!
SO, I WANT TO EVEN THINGS UP A LITTLE I WANT YOU TO TEACH ME SOME MAGIC!
WHAT?! I'D SOONER DIE!
I'M SURE YOU WOULD, ZUMAS, BUT WOULD YOU LET YOUR DAUGHTER DIE? I THINK YOU'LL AGREE, IT WOULD BE A TERRIBLE WASTE!
I... SEE THAT I HAVE LITTLE CHOICE. VERY WELL... MY GRIMOIRE IS OVER HERE!
YOUR GRIM-- WHAT?
GRIMOIRE! IT'S MY PERSONAL BOOK OF SPELLS! EVERYTHING I'VE LEARNED OF WIZARDRY, I'VE SET DOWN IN THIS BOOK! IT TOOK ME YEARS TO COMPILE IT!
WHAT DO YOU WANT TO LEARN HOW TO TURN BASE METAL INTO GOLD?
I SHOULD SAY NOT!

(continues on page 75)

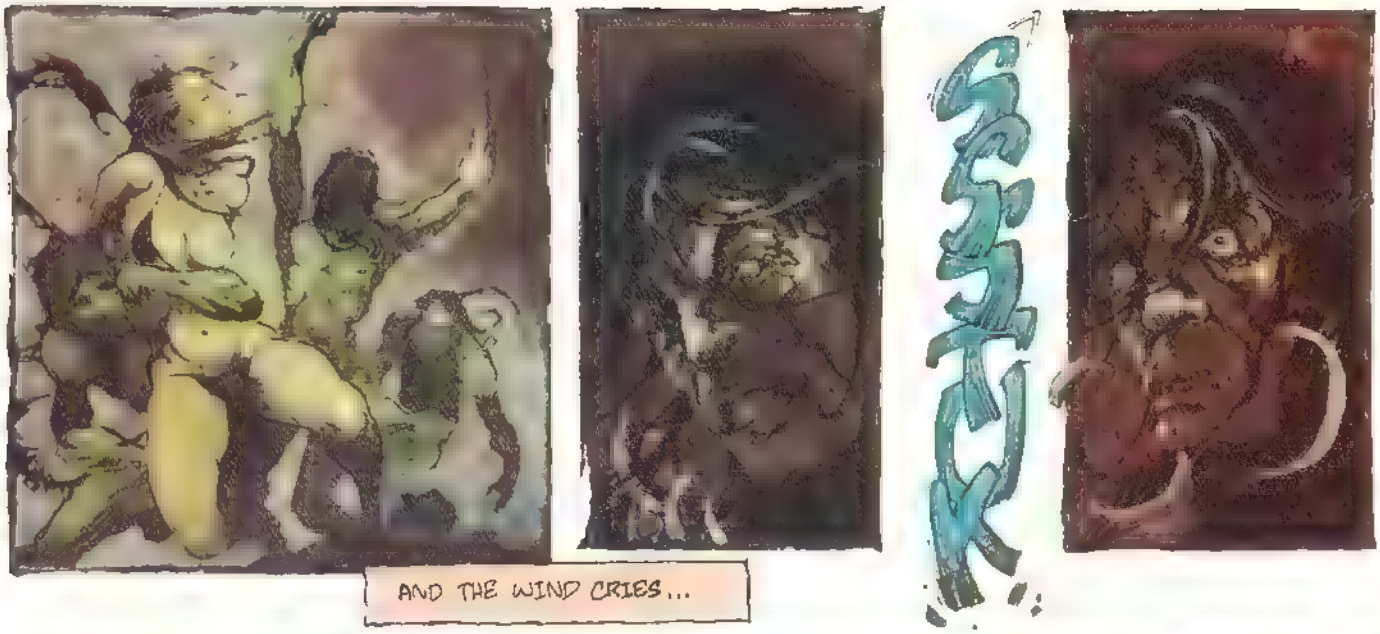
PAXORIS...A WORLD THAT REVELS IN ITS AGELESS GLORIES. A SPECK IN THE UNIVERSE THAT GLOWS NOT FROM THE DISTANT FIRES OF ANCIENT WARS BUT FROM THE LAMPS OF A LASTING PEACE.
FANTASY KNOWS NO PURPOSE HERE...WHERE KINGS AND QUEENS STRIDE LAST HILLS OF ROLLING GREEN. WHERE, TOO, A PRINCE SITS IN INNER ANGUISH, HIS HEART LOST AND LONGING FOR A PRINCESS HE IS UNABLE TO FIND.
KADJEK IS UNABLE TO REST HIS MIND FROM A SEARCH WHICH HAS TAKEN HIM TO DISTANT LANDS WHEREIN LAY WOMEN OF SPLENDOR. YET IN ALL THE BEAUTIES, NONE COULD MATCH THE VISION OF HIS HEART.
AND IT IS IN HIS DESPAIR THAT HE CONSULTS BUT ONE LAST RESOURCE...
...THE PRIVATORS, DRUIDS OF LIGHT AND SHADOW WHOSE VISIONS REVEAL WORLDS, BOTH, IN THE THROES OF DEATH AND ON THE THRESHOLD OF THE
primevil
TELLING A TALE NOT TOO IMPORTUNATE
TO THOSE WHO IN THE SLEEPY REGION STAY,
LULLED BY THE SINGER OF AN EMPTY DAY
WILLIAM MORRIS

story © 1983 George Pratt artwork © 1983 Kent Williams

AS TOLD BY GEORGE FRATT AND KEATH WILLIAMS.
IT IS WITHIN THE MECHANIZED, YET LIVING, CAVERNS DEEP BELOW PAXORIS THAT KADSEK LAYS FORTH HIS TROUBLED THOUGHTS
THE HUM OF THE MACHINERY AND THE CRACKLING SHIFT OF BLACK CLOAKS ARE THE ONLY ANSWER TO THE PRINCE'S PLEADING EYES.
THOUGHTS FLASH AND RIPPLE AS A PRIVATOR BARES HIS WISDOM IN A FRACTURED VOICE
KADSEK, ONLY UPON ONE WORLD HAVE WE FOUND AN EARTHLY FORM WHICH LIVES THE IMAGE REVEALED IN YOUR MIND

MISTS SEETHE TO THE RHYTHM OF THE AMBER GLOBE WHICH THRUMS ENERGY AND LIFE FROM ITS PULSATING CORE.
PLACE YOUR HAND INTO THE VERY HEART OF THE BREATHING STONE...
... RELEASE YOUR SOUL, KADIEK, AND THE VERY ESSENCE OF YOUR BEING WILL SHIFT REALITIES... PLANES WILL MERGE AND YOU WILL BE SPIRITED AWAY TO THE FROZEN WORLD AND THE OBJECT OF YOUR QUEST.
AND THE PRINCE OF THAT WORLD..
... FADES FROM THE CAVERN OF THE AGELESS DRUIDS...
THE LIGHTS OF PAXORIS DIM AS THE ENERGIES OF A PLANET ARE THREADED TO A SOURCE OF MYSTIC ENCHANTMENT.
...TO THE GLACIAL WORLD...

. OF HIS QUEEN
MADJEK'S FORM GATHERS FLESH NOT IN THE CALM OF SNOWED HILLS, BUT IN A STORM OF PRIMEVAL LUST AND ELEMENTAL FURY.
WARMED BY THE PROMISE OF WHITE FLESH, KNIVES ARE DRAWN, AND THERE IS ONLY FEAR IN THE BREAST OF THE FROST MAIDEN.


AND THE WIND CRIES...

AN ELEGY TO LADY DEATH SHROUDED IN CRIMSON SNOW.

DEATH IS THRUST ASIDE.
...FOR THE FURY OF THE STORM HAS PASSED AND IN ITS STEAD IS THE GENTLE BREEZE OF LIFE AND A PROMISE FOR THE FUTURE.
KADTEK, LACED WITH CRIMSON, STANDS BEFORE A DREAM.
THE GIRL, HER BREATH A SILVER VEIL, STANDS IN MUTE FEAR AND SUSPICION BEFORE HER SAVIOUR. THIS STRANGER, A THREAT FROM THE UNKNOWN, BECOMES MORE FRIGHTENING THAN HER PREVIOUS ASSAILANTS.

IN THE IGNORANCE OF HER WORLD, THIS CHILD OF THE SNOW DOES NOT REALIZE THAT A DOORWAY TO THE FUTURE STANDS BEFORE HER.
SHE LEAVES THE FUTURE TO BE COVERED BY THE SNOWS OF THE EARTH
CRUNCH!
KADJEK'S STEP IS SOFT UPON THE RED DUST AS HE KNEELS TO OFFER HIS HAND TO THE PRINCESS OF PAXORIS
... TILL THE SPRING OF KNOWLEDGE WILL LEAP FULL UPON HER WORLD
PAT WILLIAMS ©1983

GEE, CHUN TARR, THAT SURE COULD BE A HANDY SPELL.
A HANDY PATH TO DEATH, YOU MEAN! IF WE HAD ALL THE GOLD WE WANTED, OTHER THIEVES WOULD COME AFTER US!
NO, WHAT I WANT IS POWER--SO I CAN BE A BIG-SHOT WAR-LORD!
DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING THERE THAT WILL MAKE A SWORD INVINCIBLE?
IS THAT ALL? OF COURSE...TRY THIS!
SOON
SCHWETAEKON... MAELPHIM... POETRACARR!
DID I DO THAT RIGHT?
YOUR PRONUN-CIATION WAS A LITTLE LACKING, BUT IT SEEMS TO BE WORKING
HAH-HA! THIS IS INCREDIBLE! NOTHING CAN RESIST MY SWORD NOW!
WATCH WHERE YOU RE SWINGING THAT THING, YOU IMBECILE!

CLANG
CHUN TARR!!
THUD
WHU- ?
CLUMP
CRASH
HO-HO! I'M ALL RIGHT, GRUNG--NOT TO WORRY! BUT, BY SHYLON, WHAT A SWORD!
TO THINK THAT I'M TEACHING THIS BUFFOON THE SECRETS OF THE AGES!
WHAT IS NEXT IN THAT WONDERFUL BOOK OF YOURS, ZUMAS?
THERE MUST BE SOME WAY OF DISPENSING WITH THIS KNAVE WITHOUT SACRIFICING MY DAUGHTER!
HMM... "DISPENSING" THAT'S IT!
AH, I THINK WE CAN SKIP PAST THIS, AND GO ON TO SPELLS FOR UNDERSTANDING TONGUES!
SKIP PAST WHAT?
IT'S NOTHING IMPORTANT.
I'LL BE THE JUDGE OF THAT! NOW, WHAT DID YOU FLIP PAST?

IT WAS JUST A GETAWAY SPELL!
I TOLD YOU NOTHING IMPORTANT! IT'S JUST A MINOR SPELL FOR WHISKING ITS CONJURER TO SAFETY IN TIMES OF DANGER!
GETAWAY SPELL? WHAT'S A GETAWAY SPELL?
ZUMAS, I DEMAND THAT YOU TEACH ME THAT SPELL!
VERY WELL. AS YOU WISH!
MINUTES LATER
ALL RIGHT, I THINK YOU'RE READY TO TRY IT NOW.
BUT BE VERY CAREFUL WITH THE PRONUNCIATION THIS TIME - OR ELSE YOU'LL ONLY PRODUCE A HATFUL OF PLAYING CARDS!
HERE GOES!
MAHIGAHN... KOHTURON... BAEGUIN!
TOOOCH

GEE, THAT WAS REALLY SOMETHIN'! WHERE D CHUN-TARR GO?
FAR AWAY, SIRRAH!
KLAVIKUS... FLAGILUS... GRANITUS!
VERY GOOD! ONE OF MY BETTER SPELLS, IF I DO SAY SO MYSELF!
YOU'LL MAKE A FINE LAWN ORNAMENT, KNAVE! AND I DARE SAY THAT YOU'LL SCARE THE PEDDLERS AWAY!
ZANG
THE SPELL IS TOTALLY UNDIRECTED. IT AUTOMATICALLY SENDS ITS CONJURER SPINNING OFF THROUGH SPACE AND TIME! THERE'S NO TELLING WHERE HE'LL TURN UP!
MY DEAR, SWEET LIVIA! I'M SORRY THIS TOOK SO LONG!
I KNEW YOU'D FIND A WAY, DADDY!
I JUST FEEL SO FOOLISH FOR BEING CAPTURED! IF ONLY THE SLY ONE HADN'T SURPRISED ME AS I WAS FINISHING MY BATH!
WHEREEVER DID YOU SEND HIM, ANYWAY?
I DIDN'T. HE SENT HIMSELF! HEH-HEH! I TRICKED THAT CHUN-TARR INTO INVOKING A SPELL OF TRANSDIMENSIONAL TRANSPORT!

AND THIS IDIOT COMPANION OF HIS WON'T TROUBLE US ANY MORE, EITHER!
PERHAPS IT'D BE BETTER IF WE PUT HIM IN THE GARDEN! THOSE BLASTED CROWS THINK THEY OWN THE PLACE!

OH, DADDY! LOOK!
YOUR BOOK OF SPELLS IS GONE! CHUN-TARR MUST HAVE TAKEN IT WITH HIM!

WHY .. THAT DIRTY

DADDY?

LET'S SEE "CHAPTER ONE, HOW TO TURN BASE METAL INTO GOLD"

SHHH THE PAIN IN YOUR EYES MAKES ME CRUEL

P A R T • T W O

A WRAITH, SHE WAS, LED FORWARD BY A DARKLING MAN HIS MOST GRADUAL GESTURE ENTANGLED WITH SADNESS

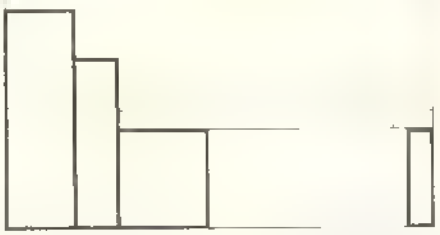
THE MYTHOLOGY OF

DAY DISSOLVES AND PLUNGES IN-

AN ABANDONED CITY

WARD AND HURLS DOWNWARD THOUSANDS OF ENORMOUS DREAMS SHE WASN'T AWAKE AT ALL

SHE WAS TAKEN TO THE PARTY. A GATHERING OF DREAMING WOMEN, COOL FACES HAUNTED, DYING SILENT MINDS



WIDE EYED PANIC AND CHAMPAGNE, BLIND HER AND CAUSE HER SPEECH TO SLUR. TENSION AND SAD REMEMBERING MAKE HER LISTEN, KEEP HER FROM HEARING THE QUIET MAN.

"SUPPOSE I DREAMED THIS" SAID THE VOICE

NOTHING CAN SAVE YOU NOW

THE VOICE

AND

THE QUIET MAN

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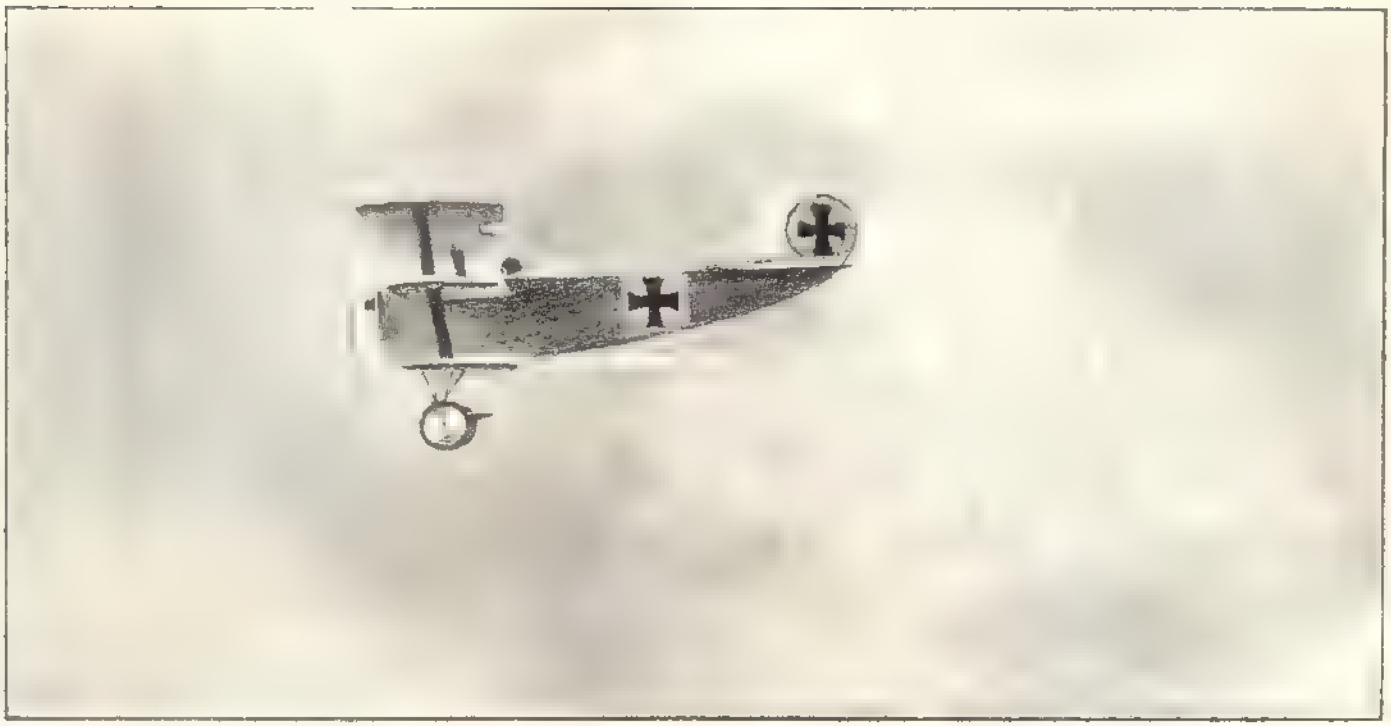
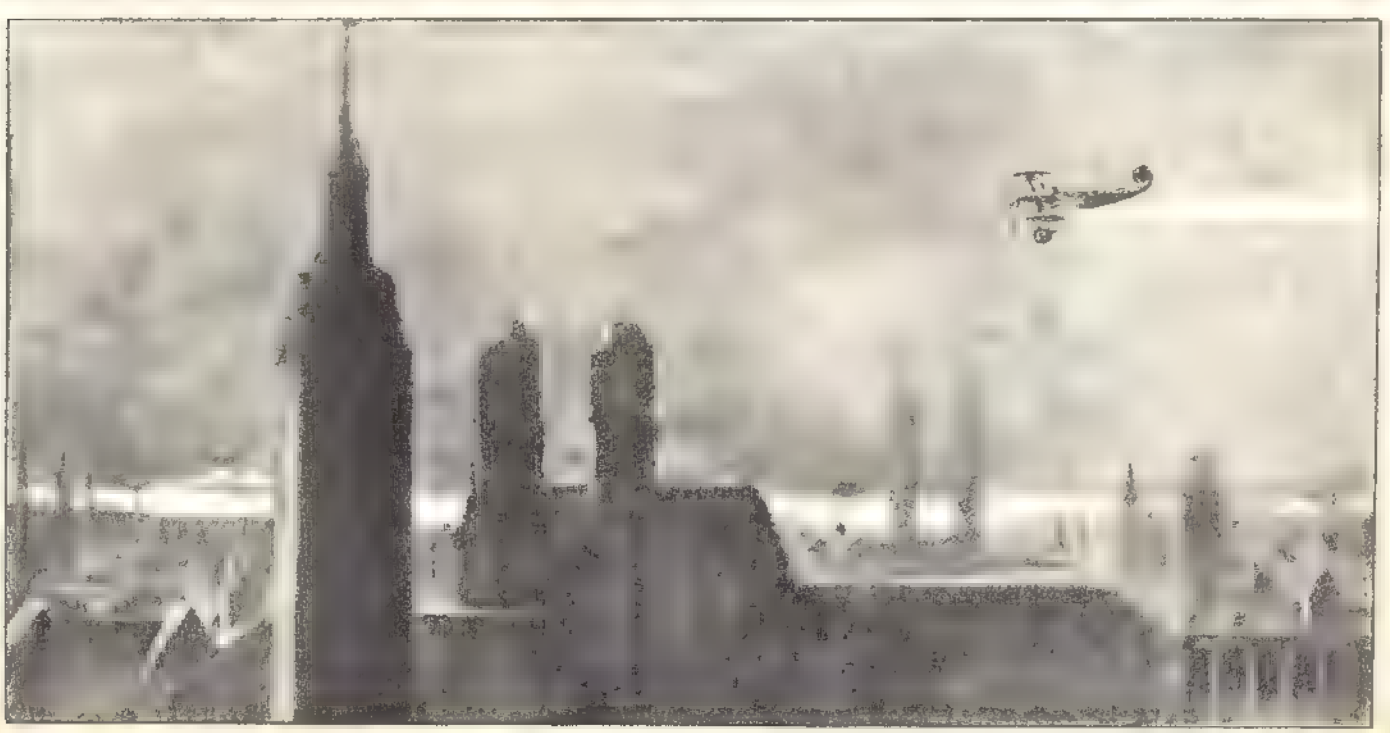




WHAT IS THIS PLACE?
ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW .
WILL BE YOURS
SOON
I AM CALLED TO THE UPPER HALL AND SO I WILL LEAVE YOU HERE
ANYTHING YOU WANT NEED ANYTHING AT ALL
PERHAPS THEY CAN HELP YOU FIND IT

WELL OF COURSE I HAVE AND WITH THE RAZORS.
DO YOU THINK I SHOULD WEAR THE LACE-UP THING NEXT TIME? YOU KNOW, THE ONE WITH THE GARTERS
KEEPS THREATENING AND I JUST ACT LIKE I DON'T WANT TO HE LOVES IT.
DID YOU EVER NOTICE, LIKE, THE WAY HIS EYES KIND OF.
EXCUSE ME I JUST
. . . HAD TO UNTIE HIM AFTER THAT, BUT SHE SAID HE WAS FINISHED.
PARDON ME BUT IS THIS. .
HE WAS TELLING ME ABOUT THE SLEEPWALKER HE SAID NOT ONLY ARE HIS HANDS LIKE THAT, BUT SO IS HIS.
REALLY?

DID YOU SEE THAT?
I'M NOT EXPECTING ANYONE ELSE. WHO DO YOU SUPPOSE IT IS?
YES
I HAVE NO IDEA SIR
WELL, MR WALKER, I DO BELIEVE SOMETHING IS AFOOT WOULD YOU BE SO GOOD AS TO GO AND SEE IF YOU CAN FIND THE ONE FLYING THAT PLANE? BRING HIM TO ME!
RIGHT AWAY, SIR

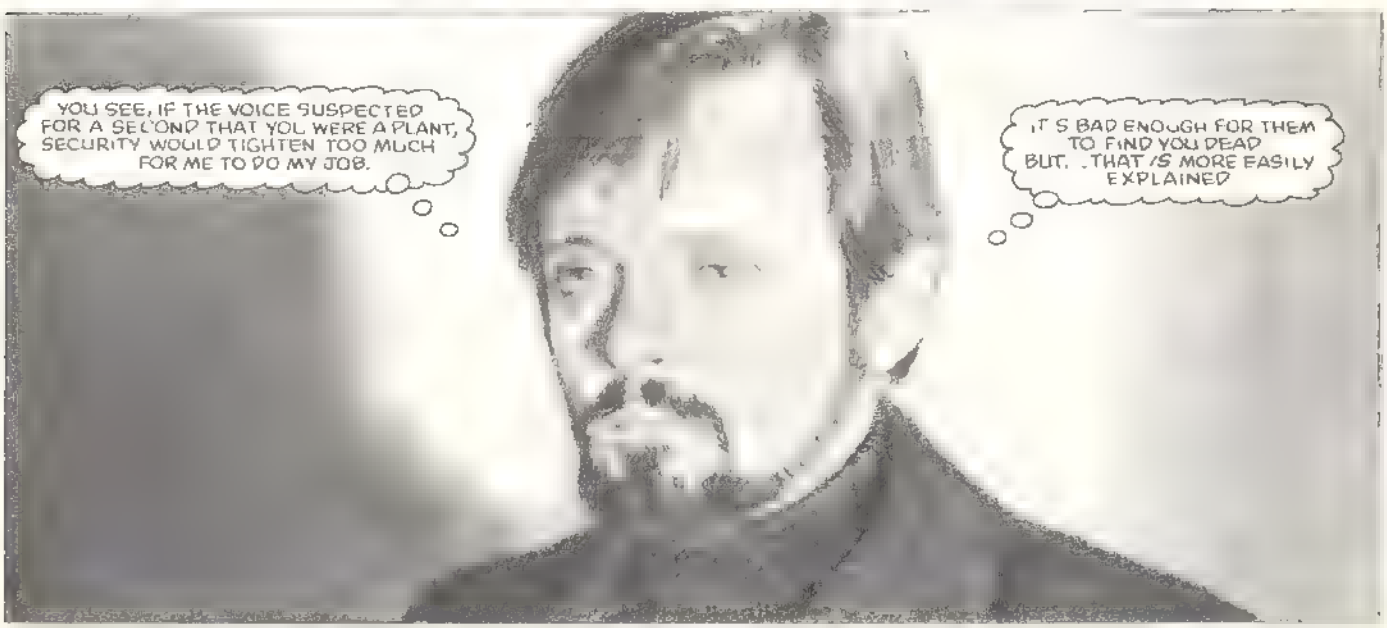
SEND MR X HAVE HIM TAKE SOME SHADOWMEN WITH HIM. THEN, WHY DON'T YOU STAY AT THE PARTY AND SEE HOW OUR GUEST IS GETTING ALONG? ENJOY YOURSELF HAVE A DRINK
OH, AND UM MR WALKER?
ONE MORE THING, DID YOU HAVE MUCH TROUBLE GETTING HER HERE?
NO, SIR. I HAD TO KILL THE BOY. HE WAS TRYING TO TAKE HER OVER THE WALL
I SEE
MR X! YOU WILL NEED YOUR CAR AND SOME OF THE MEN FOR THIS.

THERE! THAT LIGHT! STOP NEAR THE CRASH
THERE ARE NO BODIES SIR.
TAKE THE MEN AND COVER THE EAST SECTION FIND WHO CAME DOWN AND BRING THEM TO ME ALIVE I'LL TAKE THIS AREA.
REMEMBER. I SAID ALIVE!!

'BECAUSE HE COULDN'T SEE HIMSELF 'SCHIELE?' IS IT YOU? THANK GOD YOU MADE IT!
DON T MOVE ' DON'T EVEN BREATHE OR I WILL KILL YOU ' ANSWER QUICKLY.' WHY DID THE PEACOCK SCREAM?'
BE STILL ' WHO ARE YOU?
I AM X GOD, I THOUGHT THEY WOULD NEVER SEND YOU MAY I TURN AROUND NOW, SIR?
CERTAINLY NOT WHAT IF THE REAL X HAS BEEN DISCOVERED
.. AND IS HELD CAPTIVE IN THE TOWER AND YOU ARE A SUBSTITUTE, WAITING TO GIVE A SIGNAL FOR YOUR FRIENDS OUT IN THE STREETS?!
I ASSURE YOU SIR, I
WHAT ARE YOUR ORDERS?
UH, I AM TO GIVE YOU THE KEYS THAT I HAVE TO THE TOWER THEY ARE IN MY POCKET DON'T WORRY ' THE VOICE DOESN T SUSPECT ANYTHING I HAVE BEEN VERY CONVINCING '
WHAT ELSE?

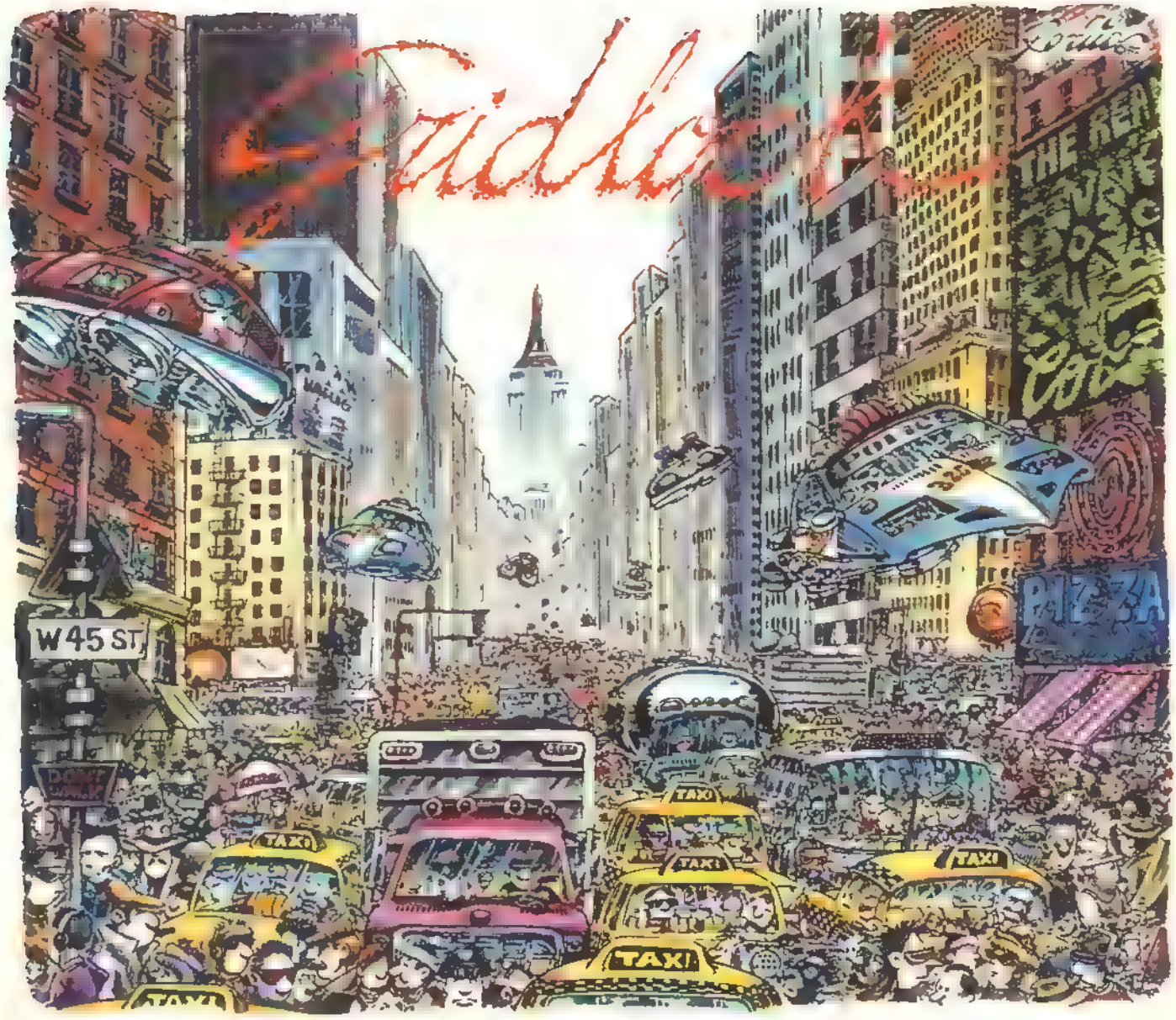
I HAVE SECURED THE WEAPON YOU WILL NEED. IN THE SEWERS BENEATH THE TOWER YOU WILL FIND IT.
GOOD WHERE DO I MEET GANZ?
YOU DON'T GANZ IS DEAD
I HAD JUST HEARD ABOUT IT BEFORE THEY SENT THIS PATROL TO LOOK FOR YOU SO I DON'T KNOW WHAT HAPPENED EXACTLY THE VOICE SENT THE SLEEPWALKER OUT. I ASSUME THAT THE SLEEPWALKER KILLED HIM
A REPORT CAME IN THAT A BOY WAS TRYING TO HELP A GIRL GET OVER THE WALL I THINK THE BOY WAS GANZ
SHIT
WHAT ARE YOUR ORDERS AFTER YOU HAVE SEEN ME?
I AM TO GO OVER THE WALL AT EAST SECTOR BOLT HOLE POINT FIVE
AND IF YOU ARE CAUGHT?
I WON'T BE CAUGHT IT IS LESS THAN ONE KILOMETER DON T WORRY
I WON T

THERE WAS A CHANGE IN PLANS, MR X
YOU COULDN'T GO OVER THE WALL


YOU SEE, IF THE VOICE SUSPECTED FOR A SECOND THAT YOU WERE A PLANT, SECURITY WOULD TIGHTEN TOO MUCH FOR ME TO DO MY JOB.
IT'S BAD ENOUGH FOR THEM TO FIND YOU DEAD BUT... THAT IS MORE EASILY EXPLAINED

YOU THERE!! STOP!

MYTHOLOGY OF AN ABANDONED CITY concludes next issue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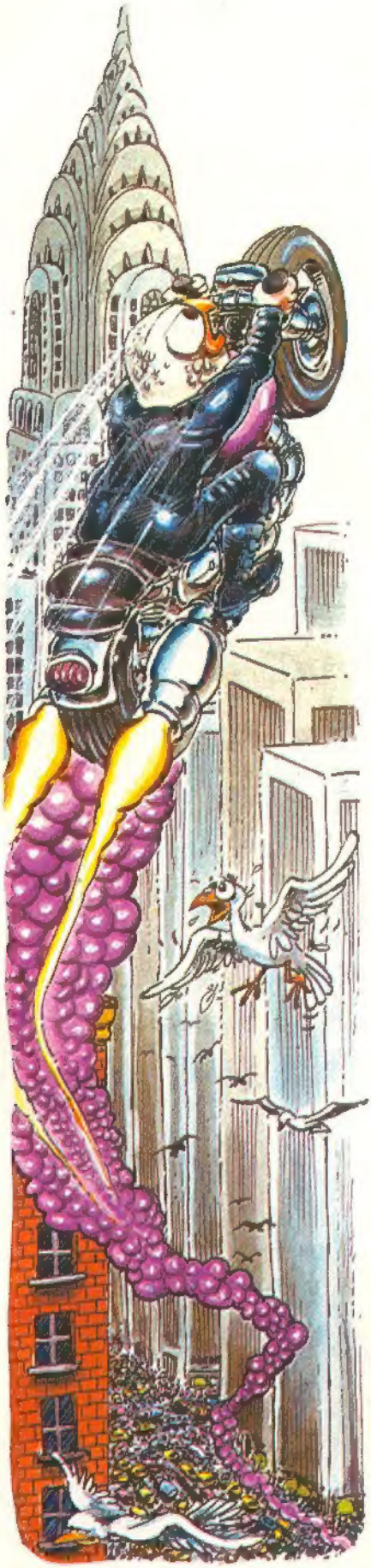

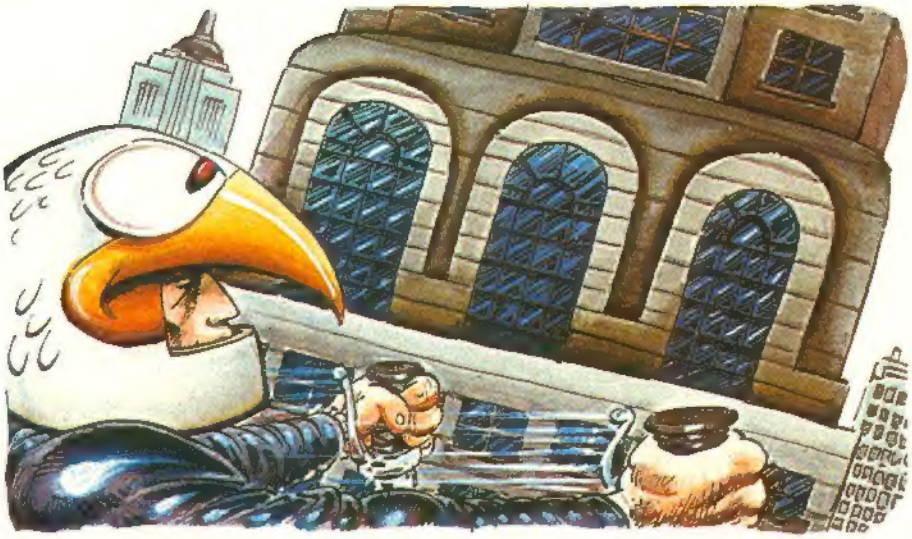

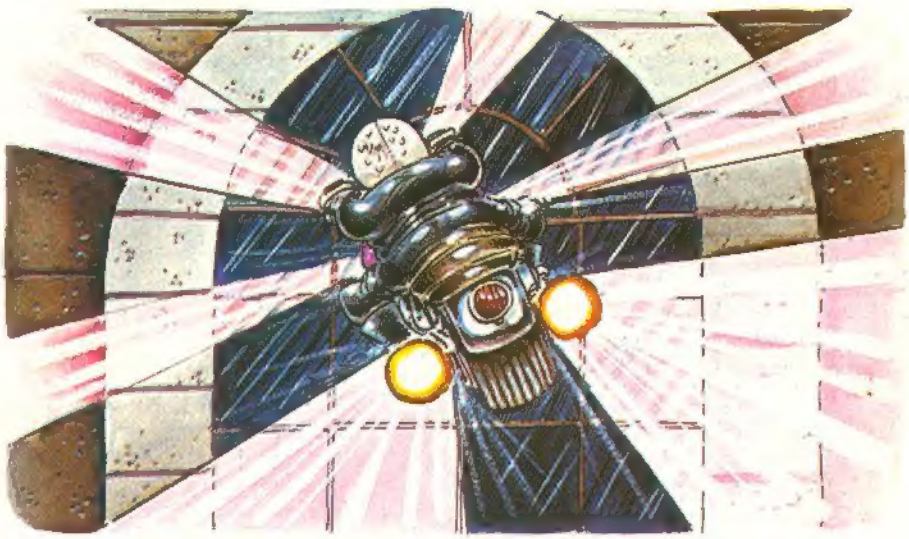

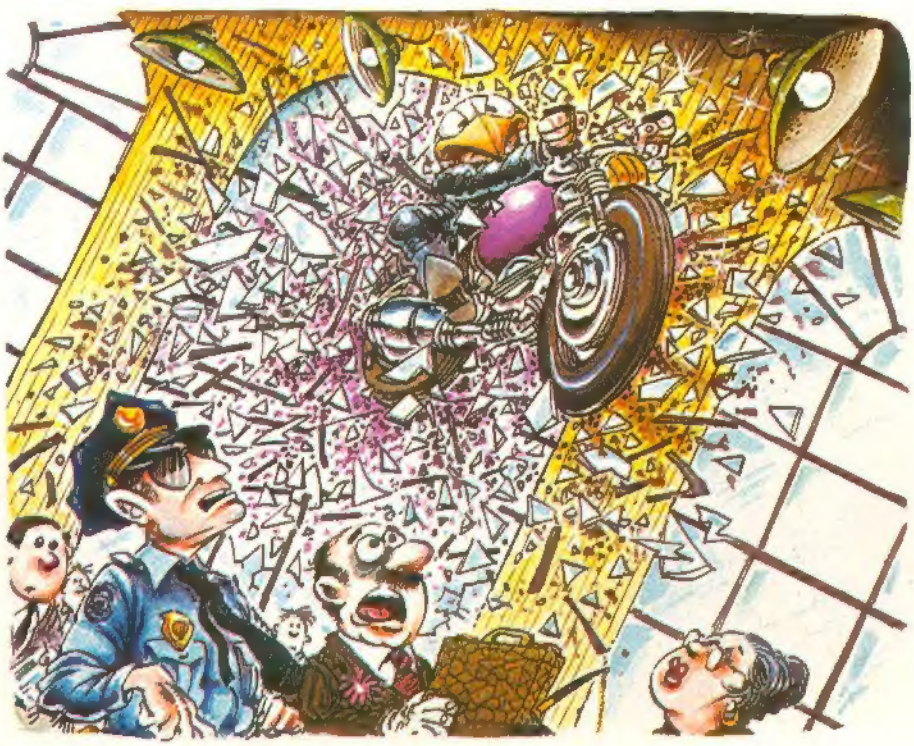

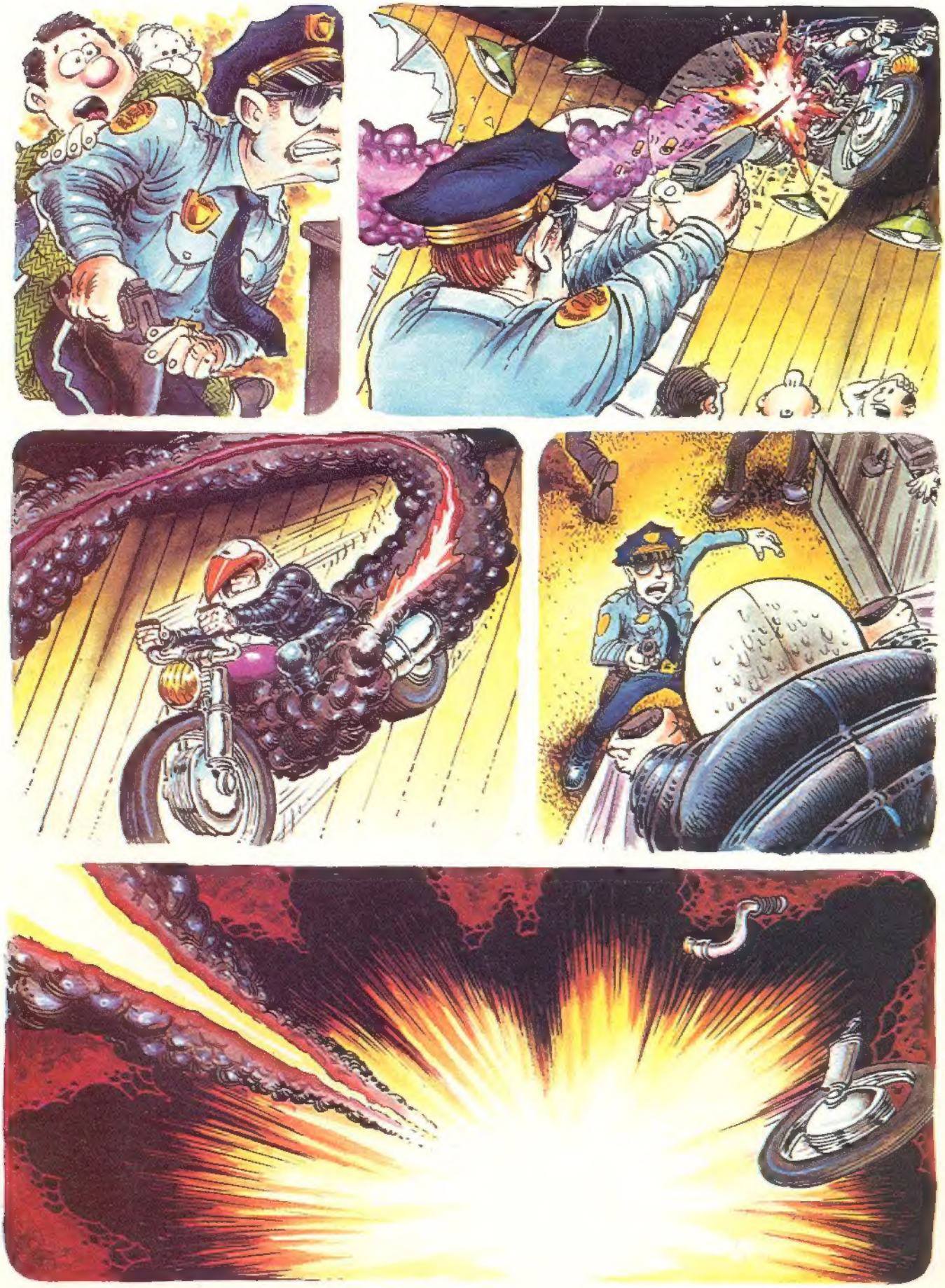

FEDERAL EXCESS

WHEN IT ABSOTIVELY, POSOLUTELY HAS TO GET THERE ON TIME!